GRAMMAR FOR COMPOSITION

by

C. H. WARD

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C. H. WARD



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PREFACE

There is general agreement that only functional grammar should be taught in the schools, but there is no agreement on a definition of "functional." Chapter 1 discusses the four purposes that have directed the study of grammar, and concludes that only one of these is successful—namely, to improve the style of composition. This purpose has a long and indubitable record of achievement in the practice of experienced teachers throughout the country. By means of grammar they have cultivated what has not been attained in any other way, and what is indispensable to real education—the ability to compose correct and agreeable sentences.

The method of cultivating style by way of grammar was slowly developed during nineteen years of teaching (1898-1917) before any of it was published. Between 1917 and 1932 the method was clarified and extended in a series of composition textbooks that were frequently revised; it was outlined in Chapter VI of *What Is English?* and in numerous articles for the pedagogical journals. These exhibits of really functional grammar were partial and scattered descriptions of how composition could be improved by the right teaching of grammar. There has never been any complete and systematic exposition of how good sentences are produced by means of the study of syntax. For many years I have been wishing to make the exposition in a book devoted entirely to this one purpose. At last there is an opportunity to carry out this purpose. I have written *Grammar for Composition.*

This is a grammar. All the technicalities of forms and classifications are here, systematically arranged for reference. But the arrangement and emphasis of subjects are such as to make the book quite unlike any text previously published, as can be seen in the following numbered paragraphs:

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1. The forms and classifications—which are the conspicuous major portion of other grammars—are put in Part Four as mere reference material that is useful only indirectly and slightly.

2. The emphasis is on Parts One and Two, which give a full display of all the elements of sentences, of the ways of manipulating these for variety, and of the different types of sentences. A complete understanding of the structure of all sorts of sentences is a far wider field than most teachers realize, and far more productive in the teaching of composition.

3. The order of topics in Part Two is the order in which they can be successfully taught. No previous text has given any inkling of this element of pedagogy that is so essential to success. If the right topics are taken up in the wrong order with a class, pupils are bewildered and disheartened; the proper order gives them confidence and enables them to see that each day's work is an advance that counts for something.

4. A teacher who wishes to find out for himself what "grammar for style" means can now follow each step of the process. Classes of prospective teachers of high-school English can now be equipped with a textbook that saves the time of the instructors who want to convey an understanding of the fundamentals of high-school composition.

5. Part Three is a systematic explanation of all the elements of syntax, arranged for ready reference when a teacher wishes information about any particular point. Part Four is a similar reference section for the forms of words.

6. Part Five is a collection of 250 sentences that are classified for use as exercise material. A teacher who wishes to have a thorough acquaintance with grammar cannot trust entirely to the exposition given by a textbook, but must apply the principles to miscellaneous sentences. Not until he has done much of this practice work will the knowledge become

his own, so that he can confidently impart it to his pupils. Instructors who prepare teachers of English for high-school work will find Part Five a necessary supplement for confirming and making familiar what the text explains.

The nature of the text of Parts One, Two, and Three will never be understood by anyone who has not read and digested Chapter 1. *Grammar for Composition* is not a compendium of classifications nor a philosophy of language. It is a description of a teaching program. It is the result of thirty-five years of constant effort to discover the best practical plan of informing pupils about the structure of sentences. A theoretical grammarian is intent upon all the elements of speech and upon the logic of each element separately; but a practical workman with school grammar must throw into relief those elements that are directly useful, and must aim at a consistent outline that will embrace all those elements with a uniform logic. He can achieve this uniformity only by long years in the classroom, attentive to the multitude of difficulties and seeking daily for some way to smooth them out, one by one, as good fortune shows him light. Mere scholarship cannot prepare grammar for pupils, any more than a technical knowledge of chemistry can prepare food in a kitchen. A cook must have experience with pots and stoves and appetites: the man who devises school grammar must have experience with comma blunders and dull minds and ways of making grammar alive in a recitation.

Yet scholarship is needed to prevent the intrusion of personal crotchets and to provide the best that the most thorough students have agreed upon. For a third of a century I have been a curious inquirer into the ways of English words, seeking almost daily to learn what dictionaries and grammars agreed upon and where they differed. The wisdom of America's greatest philologist, William Dwight Whitney, was my first guide. Mätzner's three-volume *Englische Grammatik,* to which Whitney paid homage, has furnished endless infor-

mation. Jespersen's four volumes of *A Modern English Grammar* and his *Philosophy of Grammar* are not directly useful as a model for anyone whose chief concern is the easy way for pupils, but his canny originality of treatment has been a constant reminder that ancient ways of thinking about syntax may not be the best ways. The five volumes of Poutsma's *Grammar of Late Modern English* have been an immense treasure-house of illustrations and unexpected points of view, though the logic would often be misleading for American pupils. Curme's *Syntax* has reassured me on some points where I was afraid of seeming too venturesome. Onions's *Advanced English Syntax* has thrown light into some dark corners. Not a few valuable ideas have been gleaned here and there through the years from some two dozen elementary grammars designed for school use. By far the greatest source of knowledge has been the *New English Dictionary* (usually called the *Oxford*), not only because of its vast store of quotations, but because of its unfailing good sense in the interpretation of idioms.

The purpose of the *Oxford Dictionary* is the one that should animate every teacher of grammar: to discard mere theories of what is "right" and to seek for the facts of usage. The teaching of wrong theories and mere prejudices has perverted millions of costly hours in American schools during the twentieth century. To all who believe in cutting down this waste I commend Sterling A. Leonard's *Current English Usage,* published for the National Council of Teachers of English, which presents evidence of "the actual practice of the educated world." Whatever we may judge about some of the findings in this book, we must realize that our grammar work will not be well directed until we have resolved to discover what usage actually is and to be loyal to it. This is the effort that has been made in every page of *Grammar for Composition.*

My aim has been to avoid any notions that are peculiar

to only a few of the great and the small reasoners about language, and to build into my new-model architecture only those analyses that are generally accepted as true and valuable. The architecture has not been determined by the reasoning of authorities, but by the needs of American high-school pupils. Their society requires them to know what good sentences are; no way of giving them this knowledge has yet been found except the grammar way. Ever since 1898 I have been engaged in searching for the subjects, emphases, and order of attack that are most effective. I have never been guided by opinion, but have submitted to the facts that forced themselves upon me in a long and exacting experience with classrooms and textbook-making. *Grammar for Composition* has grown out of those severe tests of the devices that produce good results in the training of average pupils.

C. H. Ward

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PART ONE

GRAMMAR FOR STYLE

CHAPTER 1

THE PURPOSE AND THE PROGRAM OF GRAMMAR

The Purpose: to Improve Style

Those who debate about grammar usually fail to define what they mean by the word and do not realize that there are four very different conceptions of the purpose of grammar. The first conception is that grammar is largely a study of the forms and classifications of single words—for example, the conjugations of verbs, the classes of adverbs, the comparison of adjectives, the inflection of pronouns. That kind of grammar is very little taught today and is generally conceded to be almost worthless. A critic who inveighs against it is wasting his energy, for the monster that he attacks is already dead. It died because it obviously did not accomplish much in composition.

The second conception of the purpose of grammar is that it improves thought processes. This conception is expressed in a variety of ways: "to increase the power to think straight," "to increase the power to express thought," "to increase the ability to understand the thoughts expressed in literature." Perhaps grammar could be made a help toward straight thinking, but no curriculum has shown the way to this splendid achievement; no teacher has published any clue to it. As for power to express thought, there may be some truth in the claim; but "power" is so ambiguous and exalted a term that it has never been fitted to any actual system which ordinary teachers can use with ordinary pupils. The "power to express" seems to mean, in practical work, no more than the ability to use good form in expressing. As for ability to understand what is read, it seems indubitable that grammar is useful in this way. The grammarless pupil,

when making his way through an author's complex sentences, understands them only hazily; his comprehension is far more vague, or even mistaken, than teachers can realize. But the extent to which his reading could be improved by studying sentences is not known; presumably his difficulties are more in the meanings of words (diction) than in the structure of sentences (syntax); presumably a great deal of grammar study would be needed to secure a slight improvement; no teaching program has been certified by experience, or even proposed as an experiment.

The third conception of the purpose of grammar is that it aims at correct idiom by a study of rules. This objective is widely accepted as a true one and is everywhere a potent influence in directing school work. For example, many programs of grammar lay stress on intransitive verbs and predicate nominatives in order that pupils may understand the logic of "It is I." Precious hours are devoted to these technical and forbidding topics for the sake of establishing the *I* after *is*. Yet the value of teaching pupils to use *I* in the predicate is questioned by some eminent critics and scholars—for example, Whitney, Curme, Jespersen, and Krapp.

Suppose that it is important for pupils to learn to use *he, she,* and *they* as predicate nominatives (It is *he,* etc.); grammar can be of little assistance in learning. Practical experience agrees with pedagogical theory that teaching the logical principle is only a very slight help in training young people to say "It is he." The idiom can be established only by hundreds or thousands of repetitions; the knowledge of predicate nominative has hardly any perceptible influence in planting or cultivating the habit.

Much time is often spent on the objective constructions of pronouns in order to furnish the logical background that will show pupils why they ought to say, "Whom do you mean?" Yet the need of *whom* in such a sentence is disputed by some of the most authoritative grammarians. Sweet,

for instance, says, "In present spoken English *whom* may be said to be extinct, except in the construction with a preposition immediately before it." When we must teach objective forms—for example, in "between you and me"—we can aid pupils only slightly by recitations on objects of prepositions; we can secure correctness only by habit-forming drills.

When we want to teach the plural verb after *there* (there are five of them), we cannot rely on the principle that the plural subject demands a plural verb; we must depend chiefly on prolonged exercise in saying and writing many times "There are two; there are several," etc.

Similar explanations can be made of how other grammatical principles fail to produce correctness. Moreover, there are only a few principles that can, by any stretch of imagination, be expected to function in the minds of pupils for establishing correct idioms. Just as it is a truism that we ought not to fight custom with grammar, so it should be equally obvious that if we try to cultivate good habits with grammar, we are doomed to disappointment.

The educational world is unanimously agreed nowadays that only functional grammar should be taught, but has quite failed to agree on what functional grammar is. Those who plan courses of study may insist that time shall be spent on only those elements which can be usefully applied in composition, but may split into factions when they try to name the applications. One faction may wish to apply grammar for securing correctness of idiom; the other may wish to apply it for increasing "the power to think straight." The first purpose is shown by experience to be vain; the second purpose has never been shown by experience to be possible. This is a striking exhibition of the fact that some of the best-informed of the educational leaders have not been able to decide what the purpose of grammar is.

No decision will be possible until a purpose has been agreed upon. If the objective of grammar is not a system

of forms, not a method of increasing the power of thought, and not a set of rules that produce correct idiom, what is it?

Thousands of veteran teachers agree on the fourth conception of the purpose of grammar: to attain an understanding of sentences. Most theorizers about education seem to suppose that such rudimentary knowledge grows spontaneously in the brains of boys and girls, or is absorbed from their reading of literature. Few theorizers ever have a word to say about the need of carefully teaching what a sentence is. Yet American universities have found that a large proportion of their freshmen—sometimes as many as a third of them—cannot pass a simple test on distinguishing between sentences and groups of words that are not sentences. There is only one way to impart to the ordinary high-school pupil a sure knowledge of how to compose good sentences: to teach him grammar. So long as a pupil knows only vaguely what a sentence is, he will be fumbling in the dark when he speaks or writes; he will make blunders which show that he is uneducated; his composition will be disreputable. Not until he has mastered the knowledge of sentences can he write like an educated person.

How little this purpose is yet understood can be seen in the work of a committee that drew up a list of fundamental necessities for school composition. The matter chiefly stressed in the list was the avoidance of the comma sentence, but the committee did not advise teachers of the only way in which pupils can be taught what a comma sentence is. Until a pupil understands how a verb and its subject form a sentence, and understands the only two ways in which independent sentences may properly be joined to form a compound sentence, he cannot know what a comma sentence is. These steps of knowledge—quite easy and plain for the teacher who knows them—seemed a long, devious, uncharted journey to the committee that was unfamiliar with the grammar road to good sentences. That road has been surveyed and graded; it is now a straight and easy highway for all classes

that wish to travel from ignorance to assured understanding. In thousands of classes and in every state the efficacy of grammar has been verified. The instructors in freshman English at the University of Wisconsin voice the conviction of many universities when they say: "Direct technical instruction in English is impracticable except upon the basis of a genuine familiarity with the elementary facts of English grammar."

This judgment is hard for many educators to understand, since it is opposed to the flamboyant theory that has dominated much of the teaching of composition since 1890. The theory —which is alluring and was once partly true—was thus phrased by an orator who addressed the New England Association of Teachers of English in 1908: "Let the large and ultimate ends of language shine through and transform your treatment of the minuter elements of language." He assumed, as those who preach to teachers of English usually assume, that if pupils are urged to be animated and fluent and socially-minded, they will acquire correct form *as a result of their desire to be clear and interesting*. The reasoning—so hard for practical teachers to accept nowadays—would be true if a pupil were strongly influenced by ultimate ends, if his classmates strongly condemned his carelessness in minuter elements, if he had been trained in a refined home, and if he had been grounded in a knowledge of good sentences by the study of Latin and Greek. All these *ifs* were once the facts of the mental environment of some American pupils; hence those pupils did not need any foundation of training in English grammar; hence there was enough truth in the theory to cause it to flourish.

But by 1920 the theory of ultimate ends had become farcically untrue. High-school pupils were no longer a select minority of young people from the most cultured homes, but had become four million pupils from all sorts of homes; the great majority of them had had no training in the classics; most of them did not know, and could not find out for themselves, what a sentence is. The result was that schools which trusted to the gospel of

"fluency first" were leaving their graduates untaught. Ease of expression had not been increased; ignorance of decent sentences had mounted to a national scandal. Pupils remained—all American colleges and universities proclaimed the fact—in an ignorance that kept increasing. The condition was thus described in 1924 by a college professor who testified in the *English Journal* about his efforts to deal with a class of freshmen who could not make respectable sentences: "Last September I spent three hours a week during the first term trying to teach something about sentence structure. . . . I did not blame the students, I pitied them; but what I thought of their teachers might damn them to everlasting punishment. . . . Students who expected to major in English had never studied grammar; they had been told that they did not need it, that they would 'absorb' all that they needed from their study of literature and from their foreign languages."

The professor could find no way of rescuing his students except by making them familiar with some elementary facts of English grammar; the University of Wisconsin has found no other way; no high school has proved that there is any other way of salvaging pupils from illiteracy. There is not visible anywhere in American education any other method of training pupils to write decently than to teach them the grammar of sentences. The teacher who puts hope in any other method is trusting to a kind of pedagogy that has proved futile. (The whole matter is thoroughly discussed in Chapters V, VI, and X of *What is English?*)

Grammar for Composition is a complete chart of knowledge of sentences. This knowledge is priceless, worth the time required for a long course of study, and not attainable except by well-directed teaching of grammar. It is the first and fundamental purpose of grammar.

Beyond this study of good form the grammar road extends to a far wider and more attractive region—the ability to form agreeable sentences and a pleasing series of varied and mature sentences. This skill causes a marked improvement of style—

in fact, the most marked kind of improvement that a school can impart. The ultimate purpose of studying grammar is, therefore, *to secure good style in composition.*

An author's style is, of course, partially a matter of artistic choice of words. This element is so dependent on innate instinct, is so multifarious and so unanalyzable, that schools can deal with it only slightly. The elements of grace and imagination are heaven-sent gifts that cannot be taught. But the element of sentence-variation—far more pervasive and effective than is generally supposed—can be taught to any pupil of average ability. What he can accomplish by learning to vary his sentence-patterns may be seen in the parallel columns below. At the left is such a series of monotonous statements as the untrained pupil composes: each begins with the subject and verb; each is either short and simple or artlessly compound. At the right is such a series as he can produce when he knows how to apply grammar to theme-writing. There is no difference in diction, yet the two styles are as different as hide-and-seek is from tennis. The difference is caused by using modifiers at the beginnings of sentences, modifiers in place of independent clauses, adjective and adverb clauses, appositives.

I raised rabbits several years ago. I raised them more for pleasure than profit. I grew tired of the hobby in time, and boys usually do tire of them. The rabbits were all sold except two, and these rabbits escaped, and they were running wild. I tried to capture them, but they hid under the carpenter-shop or in some piles of lumber. One of them was a small, spotted buck, and it became the hero of the story I am going to tell.

Several years ago I raised rabbits—more for pleasure than profit. In time I grew tired of the hobby, as boys usually do. The rabbits were all sold except two, which escaped and were running wild. When I tried to capture them, they hid under the carpenter-shop or in some piles of lumber. One of these, a small, spotted buck, became the hero of the story that I am going to tell.

The Program: Progress Toward Good Sentences

If pupils feel, every day from the outset, that each assignment is a definite step of progress toward skill in composition, they will work with interest. If, after each step of advance, they can look back and see that they have accomplished something worth while, they will anticipate further work with satisfaction. The purpose of each lesson should be advertised to them. They should be made to realize that they are not standing still and doing scholastic calisthenics, but are advancing every day toward a place where they want to be, The Land of Good Sentences.

Pupils cannot feel this daily advance if they follow the program of a textbook that is made for reference. For the grammarian has to adopt an order of topics that is determined without regard to the needs of pupils. His purpose is to present an orderly classification of a multitude of facts, to furnish a reference-book for people who are pretty well informed and who want to look up certain topics occasionally. He must be systematic, must build an orderly storehouse of facts that are grouped for ready consultation. One natural and usual arrangement of material is to begin with a summary of the eight parts of speech, to follow this with a series of chapters in which each part of speech is explained in detail, and then to show how the words are used in the formation of the different kinds of sentences. This is a logical and useful order.

But it is an order which stupefies the pupil who is learning the rudiments. If he has to study nouns for a week, then pronouns for another week, then adjectives for a week, and so on, he sees nothing but dead minutiæ each day; his only progress is from one thicket of little bits of things to another briar-patch of some more pesky things; he looks back through a meaningless wilderness, and looks forward into inscrutable darkness.

The teacher who wishes his pupils to feel purpose and to see a definite advance each day must plan an order of topics that is quite unrelated to the filing-cabinet order of a reference-book. If he does not know by experience what sequence of subjects to use, he is lost; when he has discovered a workable sequence, he can teach with zest.

There is no limit to the variety of programs that an ingenious teacher might develop. There might be a plan of beginning with a long and complicated simple sentence, leading the class to distinguish what the heart of it is (the subject and verb), then advancing gradually through the adjectives and adverbs and phrases and verbals that compose the body of the sentence. It is conceivable that the one sentence could be kept on the board, used all through the fall term, and be a constant reminder to the class of what has been accomplished and what remains to be conquered. It would be possible to begin operations with an adverb clause like "if I knew the name of it," to show that the group of words is not a sentence because it begins with *if,* to show that the group becomes an independent sentence when *if* is removed, and so to proceed toward an understanding of when a subject and verb do not make a sentence, when they do make a sentence.

Grammar for Composition follows an order that has resulted from constant experimenting for thirty-five years. This long experience shows that a good beginning can be made with verbs, for an understanding of sentences is based on a knowledge of verbs and their subjects. No sentence can be formed without a verb; whenever a verb is used, it forms a sentence or a clause. The first and greatest necessity for the pupil is that he shall be able to recognize verbs. He can feel interest and activity at the outset if he is engaged in finding those words which are the core of every sentence, around which all the other words are grouped as subject or predicate or modifiers.

His next step should be learning to find the subject of verbs, to see how a verb and its subject form a framework which supports all the rest of a simple sentence. Most subjects are either nouns or pronouns; some study of nouns and pronouns is therefore in order—not to learn classifications, but to learn about the framework of sentences. Then the pupil can advance to those words that modify subjects, the adjectives. These are important as an introduction to the modifying phrases and clauses that can be used for forming workmanlike sentences. The same purpose and program will hold for modifiers of verbs, the adverbs. The pupil can be shown every day that he is forging ahead to a complete acquaintance with all the elements of a simple sentence. He can feel confident that, when he has mastered simple sentences, his progress through other kinds of sentences will be easy. The road toward full knowledge lies fair to view before him. And beyond knowledge of the facts lies skill in manipulating the knowledge for devising a variety of mature and agreeable sentences.

CHAPTER 2

SYNTAX AS THE MOST TEACHABLE ELEMENT OF STYLE

The style of any composition is a compound of various elements: originality of conception, ingenuity in expression, use of metaphors and illustrations, choice of words, arrangement of words. The first four of these elements are largely the result of innate traits of personality, qualities of mind which cannot be taught. So true is this statement that it forms the substance of a widely accepted definition: "Style is the man." A gifted teacher of talented students may to some extent stimulate originality, but he cannot create it, cannot evoke it unless it is present. Ingenuity cannot be taught; even the use of metaphors is almost unteachable if a student's mind does not instinctively tend to comparisons of things that are in different realms of thought. The choice of words—that is, diction—though it may be much influenced by admired authors or instructors, remains to a great extent beyond the reach of pedagogy. Whatever the exceptions may be when the rare teacher deals with an unusually responsive student, the general truth remains that these four elements of style can be imparted only slightly by the great majority of teachers who train the great body of pupils in the American high schools of today.

But the fifth element, arrangement of words, can be taught to the ordinary pupil. The great importance of syntax in style is not realized by many teachers. Yet it is obvious, and deeply impressive, to anyone who observes it. The teacher who has not observed it can only dimly know the significance of grammar for improving the style of high-school composition.

A few illustrations will show how sentence-structure is a pervasive characteristic of style, and how teachable it is com-

pared with the other traits that are so elusive. The passages quoted below deserve close study by anyone who wishes to understand the fundamental necessities for improving high-school composition.

Perhaps the most noticeable feature of Thoreau's style is his constant employment of the compound sentence, in a great variety of types.

I had got a couple of old fire-dogs to keep the wood from the hearth, *and it did* me good to see the soot form on the back of the chimney which I had built, *and I poked* the fire with more right and satisfaction than usual. My dwelling was small, *and I could* hardly entertain an echo in it; *but it seemed* larger for being a single apartment and remote from neighbors. All the attractions of a house were concentrated in one room; *it was* kitchen, chamber, parlor, and keeping-room; *and* whatever satisfaction parent or child, master or servant, derive from living in a house, I enjoyed it all.

Any good account of Thoreau's style would have to dwell at length on his management of sentence forms: the occasional pages without any compound sentences, an occasional sequence of very short sentences, the frequent series of very far-stretching compound sentences.

A striking characteristic of Defoe's style is the immensely long sentences that seem childish nowadays, sentences that extend themselves straight forward in the narrative, often by means of verbals and appositives, without independent clauses.

This I not only thought possible, but easy, and pleased myself extremely with the thoughts of making it, and with my having much more convenience for it than any of the negroes or Indians; but not at all considering the particular inconveniences which I lay under, more than the Indians did, viz., want of hands to move it, when it was made, into the water, a difficulty much harder for me to surmount than all the consequences of want of tools could be to them.

Part of the difference between this style and Pater's is that

Pater contrives sentences in which modifiers are involved within modifiers—for example, like the following, which is woven about the framework "Those weaknesses may be attributed to the lack of design."

To the lack of architectural design, of a simple, almost visual, image, vigorously informing an entire, perhaps very intricate composition, which shall be austere, ornate, argumentative, fanciful, yet true from first to last to that vision within, may be attributed those weaknesses of conscious or unconscious repetition of word, phrase, motive, or member of the whole matter, indicating, as Flaubert was aware, an original structure in thought not organically complete.

A prominent characteristic of literary essays is the scrupulously contrived simple and complex sentences, as seen in the following passage from Irving Babbitt. It is not distinguished by originality of thought, ingenuity of expression, figures of speech, or striking diction; it is distinguished by the close-woven quality of its two simple and its two complex sentences.

This unbalanced type of criticism has been especially evident in recent studies of the romantic movement and can indeed be shown to derive largely from it. The more important of these studies have been listed, along with the older material, by Dr. Ernest Bernbaum in his *Guide Through the Romantic Movement,* the first volume of his useful five-volume anthology of the English romantics and pre-romantics. The question forces itself upon one whether Dr. Bernbaum's own critical judgment has kept pace with his historical scholarship when he asserts that the study of the romantic movement 'should be the most illuminating literary discipline the world has ever known.' As appears from the context, he has been led to make this singular statement by the fact that it is possible to immerse one's self more completely in historical and biographical detail in dealing with the romantics than it is with the writers of the remoter literary epochs.

The following paragraph is a vivid presentation of the actions of a girl who imagined that she had an audience for

her piano-playing. The writing is characterized to only a small extent by its diction. Its style is distinguished by its use of participles and its two verbless sentences.

Suppose this were the concert and Mr. Frey were here, *sitting* in the big chair in the corner, *listening*. *Smiling* to herself, her solemn eyes *sparkling,* she ran into the hall and faced around. Now to cross the stage. She walked back primly to the piano and seated herself on the stool, *letting* her skirt fall properly on the side toward the audience, as Miss Fanny had showed her. Then, her fingers *tingling,* she went through her piece, quite fast, *putting* in all the expression. Where the left hand crossed over the right, she arched her wrist with deliberate grace. She held the last chord, *gazing* raptly at the ceiling, *letting* her hands drop in her lap, as she had seen her music teacher do. She fetched a little sigh. Then she rose, *bowing* and *smiling* toward the armchair, and hurried off the stage. Fun to practice that way, *pretending* he was listening.

A pupil might have given every lively detail of this scene, and yet might have written in a dreary style—thus:

She supposed this was a concert and Mr. Frey was sitting in a big chair in the corner, and he was listening. She smiled to herself. Her solemn eyes sparkled. She ran into the hall and faced around. She crossed the stage now and walked back primly to the piano and seated herself on the stool. She let her skirt fall properly on the side toward the audience. Miss Fanny had showed her how to do this. Then she went through the piece. Her fingers tingled. She played quite fast, and she put in all the expression.

The sole difference between this intolerable, infantile monotony and the author's charm is a difference of syntax. Any competent teacher can train any educable child to employ all the grammatical devices that produce the author's pleasing style.

In the next paragraph there are a few words that the ordinary high-school pupil is unlikely to use, and these are a considerable force in the style: *adolescence, neutral, emotional vortex*. In the main, however, the thought and the diction are within the range of the high-school pupil's mind. What

distinguishes the style from the high-school way of writing is the skilful variation of sentence-patterns.

At this point I went to Mother and asked her if she would let me help out. It all seemed so simple and plain to me that I was sure I could make Father see it. I was in that stage between infancy and adolescence when children will do strange things. Besides, I wasn't neutral: it always upset me and shook me to see Mother unhappy; and the strong emotional vortex before me at last drew me in. Mother was pleased by my wanting to help her, and said I might try. Perhaps she thought Father's heart would be touched by the plea of his child. Needless to say, he was not touched at all; he was merely disgusted.

Every device in the author's syntax can be taught to pupils of average ability.

The untaught pupil would always begin with subjects, would write unvaried simple and compound sentences like these:

I went to Mother at this point, and I asked her if she would let me help out. It all seemed simple and plain to me, so I was sure I could make Father see it. I was in the stage between infancy and adolescence, then children will do strange things. I wasn't neutral besides, and it always—etc.

A teacher who knows nothing of syntax as an element of style assumes that an author has a kind of magic power by which he achieves the graces of composition; an informed teacher perceives that there is no magic, that the application of grammar can convert dreary formlessness to author-like skill. He yearns to hold up the light of grammar to pupils who cower in the dark, to lead them out to sunshine and freedom.

A person who has never seen a baseball game cannot coach a school nine. He may know the rule-book by heart; but if he has never slid to second or thrown home, he knows nothing about the game. So a teacher, until he realizes what grammar means for composition, cannot show a class that verbs and prepositions and subordinate clauses are anything

more than so many dead words in a philological rule-book. If he can catch the meaning of this chapter, by studying the exhibits of syntax as the most teachable element of good style for theme-writers, he can begin to prepare himself for the useful and exhilarating occupation of rescuing young Americans from the slavery of monotonous childishness in their composition.

Style is not an esoteric quality that is to be studied only in the artistry of the makers of literature. It is to be seen in every well-written advertisement, hard at work in a commercial world. And it attracts purchasers largely by the power of well-managed grammar. Write the following monotonous sentences on the board and let the class judge whether any firm would buy expensive space for printing them.

The heart of the new "Icicle" is here. It is the simplest electric refrigerator that was ever produced. This sturdy and dependable unit is down in the base of the cabinet. It is out of sight, and it is out of the way. It is put under a ten-ton pressure, and it is sealed there. It is locked in a permanent bath of oil.

Where would a pupil find such a clump, clump, clump in advertising matter? It is not to be found. Advertisers vary sentence-patterns—must vary them if they are not to throw their money away—by beginning with adverbs and phrases, using appositives, using participles and phrases in series.

Here's the heart of the new "Icicle"—the simplest electric refrigerator ever produced. Down in the base of the cabinet—out of sight, out of the way—is this sturdy, dependable unit. It is sealed while under a ten-ton pressure, perfectly protected from dust and rust, locked in a permanent bath of oil.

The successful ad-writer's diction is the same as that in the monotonous sentences. The only difference between the two styles is grammatical.

Writers who want to explain microbes or atoms or finance or politics would fail miserably if they wrote in unvaried sentences.

Primitive man borrowed and lent things before he developed money. These things were food, clothes, utensils. The borrower could use them to advantage, and the lender was always willing to part with them for a time. He had no immediate use for them. Capital was thus lent and borrowed. Capital may be defined as an amount of wealth, and it is produced in excess of immediate needs.

The style is hopelessly dull and soporific, but not because of poor diction. When the same words are combined by the use of adverb clauses, relative clauses, appositives, and participles—by mere grammatical devices—the passage sounds like an author's work.

Even before primitive man developed money, he borrowed and lent things—food, clothes, utensils. These were always something which the lender was willing to part with for a time, having no immediate need for them, and which the borrower could use to advantage. Thus capital, which may be defined as the amount of wealth produced in excess of immediate needs, was lent and borrowed.

Below are fifteen sentences in which a writer explains why she loves her native state. There are fire and originality in the passage; there are several bits of diction which could not be conceived by a literal mind. Yet these components of the style would have been smothered and the writing would have seemed hopelessly commonplace if the author had not varied the sentence-patterns. The sentences are numbered, and following the passage is a list of the grammatical devices that the author employed to make her composition effective.

1. To the stranger, Kansas is a flat, semi-arid region of monotony. 2. To us who were born there, whose fathers were born there, it is a land to be loved and to be praised, even to the point of fanaticism. 3. Attend some convention of a woman's club, listen to the speakers at any college assembly—you will hear praises of Kansas that to the alien ear are ridiculous. 4. We've made ourselves a national joke by that very fanatical loyalty to a few acres of buffalo grass and sandy river bottoms. . . .

5. The reason for this inherited love of country is that Kansas, only two generations ago, was settled by a band of missionaries. 6. There the territory lay, at the climax of the free-soil struggle, the borderland of the desert. 7. The lush fields and green hills of Missouri, well within the rainbelt, where life was easy, were the western barrier of the green country. 8. The sagebrush and sand of the eastern slope of the Rockies lay to the west. 9. And here lay Kansas, just at the edge of the rains, a fertile country, but dependent on the whims of the winds that sweep down without a hindrance from the poles. 10. If the winds blew right, there was rain; and lo, this broad plain bloomed and was as green and rich and fruitful as the plains of Illinois or Ohio. 11. But let the winds sweep another way, and the desert crept upon us. 12. Kansas was green often enough to fire the ambition and the dreams of strong men and women who were willing to work hard and suffer privations, that they might have for themselves cheap land and a free State. . . .

13. Now when you have fought the desert and taken from it, with your bare hands and the steadfastness of your soul, acres of grass and woodlands and made them bloom and bear harvest, you love that land. 14. You walk across a field, and you remember how your own grandfather fought Indians and bushwhackers from Missouri, how he fought grasshoppers and burning winds, to make a fertile field, and that soil beneath your feet becomes precious, because of the price your grandfather and your father paid, that it may today bear wheat and corn for you. 15. And when droughts come, though you may feel like cursing such a land, you remember what your forebears suffered to buy it, and you remember the crops it has raised for you, and so you rub the dust from your eyes, and look to the northwest for a rain cloud, and you remind yourself that this aridity is but a passing whim of nature.—Maureen McKernan in *Scribner's Magazine*.

1. A simple sentence beginning with a phrase. 2. A complex sentence, in which are a pair of relative clauses explaining *us,* a pair of infinitives explaining *land.* 3. A compound sentence that begins with two imperatives and breaks off to another construction, a complex sentence; "to the alien ear" is put before the verb that it modifies. 4. A simple sentence which begins with the sub-

ject and verb and ends with two rather long phrases that modify *'ve made* and *loyalty*.. 5. A complex sentence; a noun clause is the predicate nominative; the *only* phrase is in front of the word it modifies. 6. A simple sentence beginning with an adverb and closing with an appositive. 7. A complex sentence; in the main clause there are two modifiers, a phrase and a clause, between the subject and its verb. 8. A short, direct simple sentence. 9. A complex sentence; in the main clause the subject comes after the verb and is modified by the appositive, *fertile country*. 10. A compound sentence; the first coordinate clause begins with an *if* clause; the main clause of the second coordinate clause contains a compound verb. 11. A compound sentence; the first coordinate clause contains an imperative verb. 12. A complex sentence; *enough* in the main clause is modified by a long infinitive phrase, in which *men* and *women* are modified by a *who* clause; the two infinitives of the *who* clause are modified by the *that* clause. 13. A complex sentence beginning with a *when* clause in which there is a compound verb—*have fought, taken, made.* 14. A compound sentence of three coordinate clauses—"you walk, you remember, that soil becomes precious"; in the second of these three coordinate clauses there is a pair of *how* clauses; in the third coordinate clause *price* is modified by a relative clause, the verb of which is modified by the *that* clause. 15. A compound sentence of four coordinate clauses—"you remember, you remember, you rub the dust, you remind yourself"; the first of these coordinate clauses begins with two adverb clauses that modify the verb, and the verb has a *what* clause for its object; in the third coordinate clause there is a compound verb.

Perhaps the writer of the essay about Kansas had never made much study of grammar; perhaps she could not have named the word-groups that she used; she might even deny that she was conscious of noun clauses and appositives as she wrote. Yet she has made effective use of those clauses and appositives. She pleases her readers by grammatical devices that only a very small proportion of pupils can take advantage of until they have learned the devices, step by step, in school. Her mind is sensitively aware of every phase of the syntax; it contrives the sentence-patterns with unfailing skill. The difference, the profound difference, between her style

and the undeveloped high-school style is this knowledge of how to vary the structure of sentences. The knowledge may be dubbed by any fine name that one chooses—"a feel for variety," "perpetually varying the stitch," "an instinct for rhythm." The name proves nothing. The fact is—as indisputable as type and paper can make it—that a ready skill with syntax dwells in the author's mind, that her skill can be emulated only by a person who has her knowledge of sentence-structure.

How shall a pupil acquire some of her knowledge, so that he may, to the limit of his ability, develop some of her skill? There are only three answers:

1. By an exercise of his own private curiosity, by constantly observing sentence-patterns and familiarizing himself with them. This is the ideal way, the way in which most authors and editors and critics have achieved skill.

2. By a long course of instruction in sentence-patterns, a course in which no grammatical terms are used, but in which a thorough acquaintance is built up gradually. This would require many years of coordinated efforts throughout an entire school system. No school in America has planned, much less put into operation, any such method.

3. By definite instruction in grammar. Since the first way lies outside of any teaching program, and since the second way has never been put into any teaching program, only this third way is a possible road to cultivation of style. The school that does not take this road leads its pupils nowhere.

A certain percentage of pupils—that small percentage who are born with some literary knack—will instinctively absorb a knowledge of sentences; when they are adults, they will deny that grammar ever helped them. But ninety-five per cent of American pupils will not be trained by their unconscious instincts; they will remain the slaves of sentence-errors and monotony until they are rescued from bondage by a knowledge of grammar.

There are two very common misconceptions of the use of

grammar to improve style. These should be clearly understood and exploded by every teacher.

1. *That grammar is expected to work immediate magic.* When a class has had two lessons in active participles, there will not be a sudden crop of graceful participles flourishing in themes. After three lessons in adverb clauses there will not be an adverbial metamorphosis of style in the class. No beautiful fruits grow immediately from young nursery plants, either in an orchard or an English class. Time and slow growth are necessary. The purpose of an eighth-year course in grammar is not, primarily, the direct improvement of style that year. The main purpose is to encourage the new roots of knowledge, to make sure of the sturdy beginning of a trunk that will be a tree some time. So precious a power as skill with words is not to be gained in a week or a month by hasty application of bits of fresh knowledge, but only by long-continued and slowly increasing control of all components of sentences. Grammar is neither supernatural forestry nor a get-rich-quick scheme. There are times, to be sure, when a grammar topic can be made to produce a delightful change in a few weeks—for example, when a class is taught to begin occasional sentences with adverbs or prepositions. But, in general, the results come after the knowledge of all sentence-parts has been acquired and has had time to root itself and to spread slowly into composition.

2. *That grammar is an unnatural struggle which distracts the mind from other efforts in composition.* If a pupil were taught that grammar must be constantly in his mind as he writes, that he must be always contriving grammatical combinations, he would no doubt be hampered in self-expression. Professional writers are often unconscious of what types of sentence they are using while they are intent upon constructing a paragraph. Their knowledge of sentences is so complete that it works automatically, just as a stenographer's knowledge of the typewriter keys enables her to speed down the page without ever thinking where the letters are. There

was a time when she had to think, painfully recalling and slowly feeling, where each letter is. Unless she had faithfully endured this period of learning each detail, she could never have played freely on the keyboard. So there is a period when a pupil must slowly learn each item and review it. During this period his grammar will be applied only slightly and falteringly. He is not to be encouraged to hurry and worry in the application. He is to write with his attention on the story-telling or the exposition. In proportion as he becomes familiar with syntax, he learns that *now and then when the chances occur to him* he can use grammar for improving style. At length, when he is proficient, when his familiarity with syntax has become automatic, his knowledge will flow into his sentences, unbidden, even unthought of.

The following narrative, printed just as it was written by a tenth-year pupil, is an illustration of what syntax can do for style in school composition. It has no literary grace—no flashes of figurative language, no sparkle of originality, no artistic diction. It is the work of a boy who showed no instinct for style, as that word is ordinarily used in critical circles. Yet he acquitted himself well in telling about a boat-race and proved that he had acquired some mastery of what a university instructor would call style in a batch of freshman themes. It is a style that would put to shame many authors of scientific books who write stiffly and uneasily. What is the secret of the success? It is mostly in the syntax. A study of the sentence-variation in this composition is an exercise that will show what "grammar for style" can mean to the great body of literal-minded pupils in the high schools.

The Short Cut

1. Probably the most exciting night of my life was that of August 18 two summers ago, when I sailed in my first all-night sailboat race. 2. This event, which climaxes the racing season on Barnegat Bay, consists of a twenty-two mile stretch down to Barnegat Inlet and back. 3. The competing boats are divided into two

classes—those under and those over eighteen feet in length. 4. Our boat, being twenty feet long, fell in the class of larger craft, and we had hard competition. 5. Our one advantage was in the fact that we drew considerably less water than the others, and thus dared venture into shallower spots.

6. To our great delight the evening was clear, with a fresh breeze blowing from the south, which meant that we should have the easier time coming home, as no tacking would have to be done. 7. The start was made a little after nine o'clock among many shouts of encouragement from those on the dock.

8. The first mile was the hardest one, since in some places the channel was not more than forty yards wide, causing constant turning, running aground, and fouling of other boats. 9. However, after Mantoloking drawbridge had been finally passed, things were much easier, and we settled down for the long stretch to the next bridge. 10. Our crew of seven took turns lying down in the cockpit of the boat, although sleep was impossible on account of nervousness. 11. We passed through the railroad draw running third, the position which we had held during all the tiring last section of the trip down, when everyone had to be constantly on the lookout in the heavy sea and wind.

12. It was the return trip, however, which brought out our boat's true worth. 13. As I mentioned before, we drew very little water, and so by crossing a very shallow stretch we were able to cut off at least a mile, while the only boat that attempted to follow us ran hard aground. 14. Even we came so close that we often had to run up to the bow to keep the rudder from scraping. 15. But we were well rewarded for our efforts, for as we neared the end of the cut-off, we saw that we held the lead. 16. Since we had entered the race purely for the fun and with no hope of winning, our joy at this time knew no bounds. 17. The last drawbridge was open and waiting for us, and we sailed through without delay.

18. All the way down the home stretch we did our best to wake up everyone in the bay-shore houses, and, judging from the number of inquiring heads stuck out of the windows, I should say we succeeded very well. 19. About a hundred yards from the finish we all placed a hand on the tiller and guided the boat across the line—a winner by five minutes.

CHAPTER 3

THE STRATEGY AGAINST MONOTONOUS STYLE

If a teacher does not understand that grammar is useful for composition, his work will be almost meaningless to himself and the class. If he knows only vaguely about the usefulness of grammar, his efforts will be haphazard and largely wasted. Only when he knows intimately each objective of syntax, can he teach with confidence and clarity. If the distant goal is present in imagination, each daily task is seen as an advance that has meaning, pleasure, purpose.

One concrete illustration of "a distant goal" is better than a chapter of generalizing. Every teacher is familiar with the sentence-patterns in which the untrained pupil would say that the fertility of Kansas depends on the winds:

Kansas lay here. It was just at the edge of the rains. It was a fertile country, but it was dependent on the whims of the winds.

The pupil uses four verbs. Well, for that matter, many an author has used four verbs in a similar series of sentences. But an author's sentences would be a pleasing variation in a context of complex sentences and longer sentences. No author uses subject and verb, subject and verb, subject and verb, forever and forever. The teacher sees far ahead a shining goal that he knows can be reached by the grammar highway: an occasional sentence of a form in which the ideas about Kansas are expressed with one verb:

Here lay Kansas, just at the edge of the rains, a fertile country, but dependent on the whims of the winds.

The teacher knows that in the class of fifty there may be two or three who could learn to write such sentences without grammar training; he knows that forty-seven will, as a

matter of fact, never achieve any such sentence until they have been definitely taught:

That a sentence may begin with an adverb.

That a subject may follow its verb.

That a prepositional phrase need not come next to the word it modifies.

That a noun may be in apposition with another noun.

That an adjective may modify in an appositive position.

Therefore the teaching of adverbs and adjectives is elevated and transformed for this teacher. As grammatical classifications they are dead; as composition achievements they are abundantly alive. The teacher who feels their life will convey it to the class. When he is foreseeing sentence-variation, an appositive is a stage in a progress toward a better life.

This chapter gives an outline of the principal goals of grammar in composition. It does not propose a mere list of separate little recipes for avoiding monotony, but a program of sentence-variation that can be carried out only by the pupil who is master of all the usual combinations of words in sentences. Most of the ways of improvement cannot be well taught if they are kept separate. Each will be assimilated only when all have become the usable furnishings of a pupil's mind. Here is an illustration of the difference between "a separate little recipe" and "a program of variation": A class might be taught what appositive nouns are, might spend a recitation in changing coordinate clauses to appositives, and then might be told to use some appositives in the next theme. Such a lesson, if detached from other grammar lessons, would be harmful. If it came before subjects and verbs were understood, if it were not followed by lessons in compound verbs and relative clauses, it would stand alone in a pupil's mind, dimly apprehended, and could be applied in writing only by making an artificial search for a chance to employ it. The pupil would conceive that there was merit in an appositive, that a theme containing five

appositives was better than a theme which contained only two. But the pupil who is taken the whole way through a grammar program, who is brought up to think of all kinds of variation, knows that five successive appositives are silly and that no one appositive is, in itself, any better than a compound sentence. The difference between separate recipes and a whole program is the difference between a cook-book and a dinner.

If a young writer thinks of style in terms of "a number of separate devices," he will always be casting about for *a chance to use a device;* whereas if a writer is a master of the whole program of variation, his mind can freely attend to *anything that will now furnish a change of pattern.* The first writer is distracted from the business of expressing his thoughts; the second one can concentrate on expressing his thoughts in a variety of forms that are ready to serve him without being summoned by name.

All the study and application of grammar explained in this chapter are based on one fact: that the vast majority of untrained pupils rely on one type of sentence, which pervades their composition and renders it monotonous. This type is the short and simple sentence that begins with the subject and immediately follows the subject with its verb. The compound sentence, formed by adding together two or three of these simple sentences, might be called another type, but is in reality an extension and aggravation of the basic cause of monotony. The literal-minded pupil forever sets down a subject and verb, follows these with a few modifiers, *and then* sets down another subject and verb that are followed by a few modifiers. Sometimes he uses a comma, without any conjunction, between successive sentences; sometimes he uses a period; often he uses *and* or *so* or *but,* usually without any comma; his style is a statement, then a statement, then a statement, then a statement—always one statement after another, after another.

The strategy for decreasing this monotony is in two parts. First, negatively, there must be a discouragement of the habitual and heedless use of the one favorite type of sentence. Note well that this type is not tabooed because it is "bad." The practical teacher may not convey a wrong impression if he declaims against the prevalent type as poor, or even despicable; for it is wrong—in the sense that it causes monotony. But it is unsafe, and fearfully untrue, to say that the subject-and-verb-first sentences are "bad." They are as good as any other kind. In fact, they may be called better, since they are the commonest form in English literature. Schools object to them only when they are a tiresome habit. If they are used for variety, by design, they can be ornaments of style. The teacher who understands his art will never allow a class to suppose that any form of simple or compound sentence is "bad." What he discourages is the heedlessness that produces monotony.

Nor will he allow a class to feel that any type of sentence is "good." He will be on guard against stilted or pedantic sentences, for these are the vicious opposite of everything that a school should desire. A grammar course that results in affectation is a curse. The program of sentence-variation aims at natural sentences that flow easily from well-instructed minds. It aims to make pupils aware of how their composition sounds, to make them dislike monotony, to make them prize variety.

Hence the second part of the strategy against monotony is to provide substitutes for the prevailing pattern. In an elementary class the substitutes may be taught by definite exercises—not as models of how to work when writing a composition, but as a way of beginning to be familiar with the new kinds of sentences. The exercises may take the form of subordinating one simple sentence to another, or one coordinate clause to another. The formality of "subordinating" should be avoided in recitation; a good name

for the operation is "changing little sentences," with an emphasis on "little," as if the needless independent clauses were childish or scrubby things that ought not to be so prominent. The following illustrations of teaching-tactics* will show how each advance in grammar can be utilized for training a class to convert independent statements into parts of simple or complex sentences.

1. *Change to a compound verb.*. "Mr. Clay was very much upset, *and he* didn't know what to do." Make *Mr. Clay* the subject of a compound verb in a simple sentence by omitting *he:* "Mr. Clay was very much upset and didn't know what to do."

2. *Change to an appositive.* "Their cottage was a frame building about eighteen feet square, *and it* was lifted bodily by the wind." Make "a frame building about eighteen feet square" an appositive, set off by commas; let *cottage* be the subject of *was lifted:* "Their cottage, a frame building about eighteen feet square, was lifted bodily by the wind."

3. *Change to a phrase.* "There was a fierce blizzard raging that morning, *so we* had to stay at home." Change the first clause to a phrase: "On account of the fierce blizzard raging that morning we had to stay at home."

4. *Change to a participle.* "I didn't know the combination for the locker, *and I* had to hunt for the janitor." Turn the first clause into a participial group: "Not knowing the combination for the locker, I had to hunt for the janitor."

5. *Change to a gerund.* "I lowered a weight to the bottom of the well, *and I* found out how deep the water was." Instead of "I lowered" use "by lowering": "By lowering a weight to the bottom of the well I found out how deep the water was."

6. *Change to an infinitive.* "I like to stay abed as late as I please in the morning. I like to lie there and think about not having to get up." Use *to lie* in apposition with *to stay:* "I like to stay abed as late as I please in the morning—to lie there and think," etc.

7. *Change to a noun clause.* "Mrs. Nelson is growing weaker every day. The nurse told me so." Change the clause about Mrs.

*Taken from *Junior Highway to English* and from *Sentence and Theme.*

Nelson to a *that* clause: "The nurse told me that Mrs. Nelson is growing weaker every day."

8. *Change to an adjective clause.* "Mr. Dawes stared at me over his glasses. These glasses were perched far down on the end of his nose." This way of using a separate sentence to tell about the glasses is specially common and wearisome. For "these glasses" substitute *which:* "stared at me over his glasses, which were perched," etc.

9. *Change to an adverb clause.*. "The old man was staring hard at me. He seemed to think he knew me." For "he seemed to think" use "as if he thought": "The old man was staring hard at me, as if he thought he knew me."

Much harm can be done by leading pupils to suppose that they make "better" sentences whenever they subordinate one independent statement to another. It is seldom possible to prove that the simple or complex sentence which results is any better, in itself, than the coordinate clause or the separate sentence. For authors frequently have need of a compound sentence or a short, detached simple sentence to give a certain emphasis, or for variety. What the teacher must constantly impress upon pupils is that authors do not, everlastingly and sleepily, use independent clauses. They frequently—yes, more often than not—use phrases or subordinate clauses instead of independent statements. Why do they? For the sake of variety. Exercise in combining independent clauses has only one purpose: to show pupils how to improve *a series* of sentences by using a variety of patterns.

The next chapter presents a list of the sentence-variations that are cultivated, not because they are better in themselves, but because they produce—if used occasionally, when natural opportunities occur—a pleasant vivacity of style. Children hate monotony. The clever teacher will appeal to their dislike of "always the same meal, always the same kind of work, always the same sort of talkie, always the same walk on Sunday." How pleasant would a street be if all the houses on it were just alike? The worst feature of life in

a penitentiary is that all the prisoners have to dress just alike and go through just the same motions at just the same time of day. Monotony is the dread of youth. The teacher who reads a composition with a sing-song that brings out the sameness of its sentences may in one minute make an appeal that will go far to prepare the way for a ready acceptance of the substitutes for monotony. "How can we save ourselves," he will ask, "from this same-thing-over-again effect in our writing?"

The clever teacher will not trust much in appeals to the variation that is found in literature. Literature is remote, unreal, not a criterion for the approval that a child wants to win in his own actual life. What brings conviction and fires his interest is to discover that *in this class* variety is applauded. "Here," says the teacher, "is a sentence from one of yesterday's themes that gave me a pleasant minute. Listen to it. Any of you can do as well if you try a bit." Such commendation brings the abstraction of "Style" down from the sky and shows it at work on the ground, among kindred facts like clothes and games. There is no estimating its potency.

Emphasis on single sentences should not be overdone. It may be dangerous. The emphasis should always be on "this sentence as a variation among other sentences," or, better, on "this varied series of sentences." We should beware of the notion that any one sentence is good; we must persistently show that a series of varied sentences is good.

CHAPTER 4

THE SUBSTITUTES THAT PRODUCE VARIETY

"The second part of the strategy against monotony," says Chapter 3, "is to provide substitutes for the prevailing pattern." The business of Chapter 4 is to give a detailed list of the substitutes, with comment on the teaching program. This chapter is arranged in two sections: A. Variations of the usual and monotonous word-order in simple and complex sentences; B. Combining independent clauses into simple or complex sentences.

A. Varying the Word-Order

The untrained high-school pupil, if he has no innate sense of style, makes nearly all of his sentences declarative and arranges the parts of them in this order: (*a*) subject, (*b*) verb, (*c*) complement or modifiers of the verb. If he is to be liberated from this habit of monotony, he must be shown definitely how to make the variations. There are three principal ways of varying the habitual order: (1) not making statements, (2) not beginning with the subject, (3) not putting the verb immediately after the subject.

1. Sentences that are not statements

It is mechanically easy for a pupil to use a question once in a while. Instead of the usual "We wondered what this man was doing" the direct question might enliven a paragraph.

1. What was this man doing?

It is a curious fact, and an enlightening one, that only the rare pupil will notice for himself that he can ask one question amid two dozen statements. When he has once experimented and seen how easy the trick is, he has learned something valuable.

An occasional exclamation is possible.

2. What a mysterious announcement it was!

An imperative form is welcomed by readers if it comes seldom.

3. Don't suppose that Margot gave up in despair.

Most pupils are habituated to making a statement that somebody said something: "The janitor asked what we wanted." Any pupil can learn to put drama into a paragraph by reporting what the janitor really said.

4. "Why are you snooping around here?" snarled the janitor.

2. Some words before the subject

The experienced teacher is amazed anew each year by the fact that all pupils often use a few pet adverbs *(then, now, finally)* before a subject, but almost never put other adverbs there: *"Then* we thought of another idea. *Finally* the coach put in Ted Hunter." Sentences resembling those following are perfectly easy for all pupils to make, yet few pupils ever do write them until some teacher has given practice in beginning with such adverbs.

5. Seldom have the students been so disappointed.
6. Often the mimeographed sheets are smudged.
7. Slowly and suspiciously the bear approached the cabin.
8. Cautiously I chipped the wax away from the knot.

Suppose, as an illustration of wasting time in classroom work with grammar, that a teacher were merely busy with adverbs and that in the course of duty he encountered the sentence "I had seen this man talking with my brother once before." He would ask what *once* and *before* modified; the pupil might say that they modified *talking;* the teacher might reply, "Oh, no; they modify *had seen";* and then the precious minutes would go to waste while the question was argued. The fact is that no one can tell what the adverbs modify and that the pupil's analysis should be accepted if there is any logic in its favor. Who cares what the adverbs modify

in this sentence? What we ought to care about is instruction like this: "Where could you put the adverbs to make them modify *talking* unmistakably? Yes, you could say 'talking once before with my brother.' Where else in the sentence could you put the adverbs? Yes, you could *begin the sentence* with them. Few of you ever begin sentences with such adverbs. Why don't you?"

There is another reason for the teacher's practical interest in an adverb—though he may not say anything about it in this recitation. He is foreseeing the time when the adverb *before* will be mistaken for a conjunction: "The little building was now a rubbish-room, *before* it had been a carpenter-shop." He forsees that adverbs cause comma blunders, that the class can never be rescued from these blunders until adverbs are understood, until the three uses of *before* are understood:

(a) I had heard of it *before* (adverb).
(b) I will call *before* noon (preposition).
(c) I will see you *before* you go (conjunction).

Any such particular reason for interest in a grammar recitation, valuable as it may be, is petty compared with the one great reason for all grammar recitations—to give the knowledge that sets pupils free in their language. Any one application of "functional grammar" is useful—yes; but the all-inclusive function is to convey full knowledge of the structure of sentences, so that pupils may be masters of all forms. No one can achieve mastery of simple and complex sentences until he knows each detail of what adverbs do, of how adverbs differ from prepositions, of the difference between prepositions and conjunctions, and especially of the difference between adverbs and conjunctions. No one part of all the knowledge would amount to much as directly functional; no dozen parts of the knowledge would function to a great extent; but the total of knowledge is a charter of liberty and a guarantee of a respectable style. No objective in high-school education can be superior to that.

Prepositions like *before* are always put late in the sentence by writers who are timidly ignorant: "I had always been afraid of the old lady's haughty manner before that." Any intelligent pupil, no matter how unliterary, can be taught to drive prepositions away from their huddling-place at the ends of sentences, to whip them into place at the beginnings.

9. Before that I had always been afraid of the old lady's haughty manner.
10. Near the top of the chimney was the mark of a 32-caliber bullet.
11. Within five minutes the entire school was in a buzz of excitement.
12. During the next week everyone was afraid of everybody else.

A sentence that begins with a preposition is not, in itself, a lovely thing, but amidst the dreary array of the everlasting thousands of subject-first sentences it feels to a fagged theme-reader like the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.

Adverbial clauses may come first in sentences.

13. While the tide was going out, we looked for a good place to dig clams.
14. Unless you are careful, the fire will spread in the dry grass.
15. Although I had given Lester fair warning, he stayed near the hornets' nest.

Other adverbial modifiers may come first.

16. The year before, when I was living on a farm, I learned how to handle a balky horse.
17. My thirst having grown intolerable, I had to walk back to camp for a drink.
18. To make sure of at least a few replies, I enclosed stamps.

It would doubtless be poor economy to teach adverbial objectives, nominative absolutes, and infinitive modifiers of verbs in order to cultivate sentence-beginnings like those of sentences 16, 17, and 18. Pupils could be taught the constructions without the names; or they could graduate creditably from high school without the ability to employ such modifiers in their composition. The direct usefulness of the knowledge

may be slight. It is the *indirect* results that experienced teachers covet and that they will try to secure if they can possibly find the time. If, because of lack of time, a pupil must be left ignorant of those three constructions, he will all his life be at the mercy of doubts like these:

Why is "The year before, when I was living on a farm," not a sentence?

The following bunch of words looks like a sentence to me: "To make sure of a few replies by enclosing stamps."

No mind that has dwelt apart from and above the ignorance of ordinary pupils can imagine the welter of doubts and fears that sentences are to a person who has never learned all the usual constructions of words. The teacher who escorts a class through nominative absolutes or adverbial objectives is not in love with those ways of modifying, but is concerned to establish knowledge of all modifiers, so that pupils may lead a life of liberty and self-assurance when they write or speak or read.

Perhaps a psychologist will some time devise a test of the helplessness of the ungrammared mind when it encounters sentences that do not begin with the subjects. The most sympathetic and imaginative teacher cannot conceive the twisted misconceptions of uneducated people when they read sentences like the next four:

19. Curious as to what was causing the din, I stepped out on to the piazza.
20. Curious that he had never seen it before!
21. Curious gifts he often brought to us.
22. What made me curious was her way of saying "lib'ry."

Only a study of adjectives and appositives can make sentence 19 intelligible to the ordinary pupil; only a study of ellipses can show why sentence 20 is proper; the object before the verb in sentence 21 is unimaginable to one who has not analyzed it; the subject of *was* in sentence 22 would be *curious* or *me* to anyone who had not studied noun clauses.

Would it be worth while to teach these ways of beginning sentences with something other than the verb? Hardly—as mere separate devices for sentence-variation. But as parts of the whole of knowledge they deserve some attention, if there is time for them. Their direct usefulness is small; the harm they may do if they are left unexplained is great. For they hover about the ignorant person, mocking him and making him unsure of himself. So long as he is mystified by some sentences that do not begin with the subject, he will remain timorous about all of them.

3. Some words between the subject and the verb

Even the illiterate person often puts a closely modifying phrase between the subject and its verb.

23. One clue *to the mystery* was the red cover on the blue box.
24. A good way *to scare him* would be to use a "strychnine" label.

An adjective clause between the subject and its verb is not infrequent in commonplace writing.

25. The boy *who got the highest score* was excused from the next recitation.
26. The place *where we had most fun* was Gallup.

What has to be cultivated in school is the modifiers that are somewhat parenthetical. The commonest of these is the participle or adjective.

27. The man in front, *wishing* a better view, leaned far over.
28. Several children, *attracted* by these antics, looked in through the window.
29. Wilbur's hands, so *soft* and *clean,* were a laughable contrast with Ted's.

The pupil who learns to use an appositive noun or pronoun occasionally after the subject adds a touch of maturity to his writing.

30. Sam Haskin, an elevator *boy* in the Liberty Building, was studying stenography every spare hour.
31. The yucca moth, *one* of the most remarkable fertilizers of flowers, has been celebrated by many botanists.

An adverb or an adverb clause after the subject is something that all authors find effective once in a while.

32. Bascom, *strangely enough,* had never seen a starfish.
33. Myra, *although she had often been in hospitals,* dreaded the operation.
34. These tumble-weeds, *as you can see,* scatter their seeds when they are blown along.

A parenthetical infinitive or prepositional phrase may be useful sometimes, if it sounds natural.

35. Leon, *just to make sure,* turned his flashlight into the dark corner.
36. The clumsy aldermanic system, *with its divided authority and log-rolling,* might well be scrapped.

Many essay-writers like to interject a sentence between the subject and the verb.

37. The critic, *it is true,* cannot afford to be exclusive.
38. The poet, *Aristotle tells us in a familiar passage of the* Poetics, is superior to the historian.

Some writers grow too fond of parenthetical words between the subject and the verb. Anyone who uses such parentheses too often sounds affected; no pupil should be allowed to suppose that they are ornaments of style. But every pupil should gather the idea that some words between the subject and the verb will be pleasant for a reader if they prevent monotony.

B. Reducing the Number of Independent Clauses

Short declarative sentences are frequent in literature, and combinations of them in compound sentences are an element of all good style. These two types of sentences are discouraged in school because they are overused. Reducing the proportion of independent clauses is the major part of the program of grammar for style. Sections 1-6, which follow, describe the principal substitutes for the needless short sentences and coordinate clauses that prevail in uncultivated composition and render it wearisome.

1. The compound verb

The simplest, easiest, and most commonly applicable way of converting an independent clause to a part of a simple sentence is to discard the subject and make the verb part of a compound verb. For example, the high-school writer prefers, everywhere and always, this compound type of sentence: "Aunt Charlotte was very curious about this love affair, *and she* wanted to help it along." That is a proper sentence. But if this form dominates composition and enslaves a writer, it is odious. The ability to discard the second subject and make *Aunt Charlotte* the subject of a compound verb is an ability which every author has and often exercises, but which the untrained pupil may lack entirely.

39. Aunt Charlotte was very curious about this love affair *and wanted* to help it along.

If a teacher of high-school freshmen, reading the first set of themes for the year, comes upon a sentence containing that sort of compound verb, he is thrilled. Possibly he has never analyzed the cause of the thrill; perhaps he has never considered that his pleasure is produced by the mere omission of one three-letter word. Yet that is the fact. The difference between childish monotony and high-school competence is caused by not using *she*.

Only a well-directed course of study can enable the average pupil to convert a compound sentence to a simple one by forming a compound verb. His natural habit of mind is to make a sentence about Aunt Charlotte, and then to hook on to this another sentence about her. There must be a considerable revolution in his brain before he can conceive such a structure as "Aunt Charlotte was and wanted." It is this change in the brain that impresses the instructor. He is not in love with the sentence-pattern, but with the power to form it and manage it at will. Sentences similar to the following four are hardly ever found in the speech or writing of untaught pupils.

40. Allison had not seen me approach, *and so was* startled when I spoke.

41. I have often heard of these spiders, *but never before saw* one.

42. The log was full of sap *and burned* with a hissing noise.

43. For several seconds the Colonel pondered my question, *then ordered* the sergeant to remove me.

Anyone who has learned about compound verbs can, if he cares for variation, use one in a subordinate clause.

44. Above her was a beach umbrella that tilted dangerously *and seemed* about to fall.

All teachers know how uneducated youth expresses such a relative clause: "that tilted dangerously, *and it* seemed about to fall." Youth cannot be rescued from this shift to "and it" by any abstract philosophy of parallel construction, but only by teaching that begins with a concrete fact: the parallelism of two verbs that have one subject.

Here is a pretty example of the difference between ignorance and knowledge in the teaching of grammar. The ignorant teacher sees compound subjects and compound verbs in a lesson; one topic seems to him just as important as the other. But if a teacher knows about applying grammar to composition, he sees that compound subjects are hardly worth noticing, that compound verbs are a path to good sentences.

2. Appositives

A census of the amounts of effort devoted to different grammar topics in American schools would probably show that predicate nominatives receive ten times as much stress as appositives. Yet predicate nominatives are only slightly useful for sentence-improvement. Appositives are boundlessly useful.

It is not necessary to make two statements about the merits of grape-juice; one statement can be converted into a modified noun in apposition.

45. Grape-juice is an energy-builder, a glowing, purple, liquid *food*.

An ignorant person would be compelled to make two co-ordinate clauses for telling where some coal-mines are and

how they vary in size. A person who understands appositive pronouns needs only one verb, thus:

46. All along the foot of the front range are coal-mines—*some* large, *some* mere private fuel-holes.

The modifiers that are often so effective in an appositive position—the participles and adjectives shown in sentences 27-29 of Section A—will not be used easily in writing unless they are approached by way of appositive nouns. Appositives should be taught as a kind of modifier, as a word or group of words that explain a noun. Participial appositives are the most common. Instead of "and it arrives" we can say:

47. In the lower Rio Grande valley this humming-bird is common during summer, *arriving* from the South about April first.

Instead of "and it is saddled" we can write:

48. The nest is found in pine trees, fifty feet from the ground, *saddled* on a small limb, *difficult* of access.

Instead of "and they were" we can use an appositive adjective:

49. Here came some desperate men, *hungry* to the point of starvation.

An interesting way to show a class how popular writers rely on appositives is to select from some current magazine a set of sentences like the following from a *Scientific American* article on insect pests.

50. It is hard to appreciate the true menace of these pests, particularly *those* that invade the home.

51. Scientists have developed effective weapons—special *chemicals* that are fatal to insects but harmless to man.

52. It is estimated that there are half a million kinds of insects in the world, *thousands* of them harmful to man.

53. Its body and even its wings, apparently *smooth* and *shining,* are covered with small hairs.

54. Four kinds of ants do the most damage: the tiny red *variety,* the small black *ones,* the *carpenter,* and the pavement *ant.*

55. *Known* for years as one of the filthiest things alive, the house-fly has been convicted as the carrier of at least thirty diseases.

Known is an example of how an appositive modifier may precede the word it modifies.

Infinitives and gerunds may be appositives.

56. One piece of advice was forever dinned into us, *to begin* with some concrete illustration.

57. The Hoover Dam has three uses: *preventing* floods, *furnishing* water for irrigation, *developing* electric power.

A noun clause may be in apposition.

58. The lobsterman told me a remarkable bit of natural history—*that the periwinkle kills the eel-grass.*

59. An officer must always bear one thing in mind: *that the men under him are proud human beings.*

Sentences built with appositives are often unlovely things; they are not praiseworthy because of the appositives. They are valuable in school because they help to shape a style that is emancipated from the tyranny of subject and verb, subject and verb, subject and verb.

3. Substitutes for "so"

A person who has not for years been an observer of school style could never credit the prevalence of "so" sentences. All thoughts seem to present themselves to a child's mind in this order: "Something happened, so as a result something else happened." Intelligent pupils have been known to write seven or eight "so" sentences on one page—quite unconscious that they have made their composition ridiculous by such blind and deaf repetition. The school that wishes to perform its duty by pupils must limit, or must even entirely forbid, the sentences in which *so* is used as a coordinating conjunction of result.

If *so* is forbidden, substitutes must be taught. Sentences 60-71 contain the most usual ones, shown by italicized words. Anyone who is familiar with school style can tell instantly how pupils would shape the thoughts with *so;* anyone else will get a useful revelation of pupils' mental habits by trying to imagine the *so* constructions.

60. His silk hat was the only one in sight, *and so* it was very conspicuous. (*And so* is not recommended, since it is not much of an alteration and since it seems to contain the double curse of *and* with *so;* yet it is acceptable, now and then, as a relief from the habitual "so.")

61. Eggs were then worth only seven cents a dozen, *and so did not pay* for the chicken-feed. (*And so* with a compound verb is highly recommended.)

62. The air was full of smoke, *so that* we couldn't see clearly. (*So that* is not, in itself, more pleasing than *so;* but since it is not a pest, it is welcome at times.)

63. There are many bays and coves on the tiny island of Sark; *so* its total shore line is 35 miles in length. (If *so* is regarded as an independent adverb like *consequently,* if the pupil recognizes this use and puts a semicolon before *so,* he redeems the sentence; no pupil will be a victim of *so* if he can remember the semicolon.)

64. *So* many wealthy people flocked to Denver in the seventies *that* the life of the city became very gay.

65. This was *such* an unexpected trick *that* some of the children were frightened.

66. *Since* the deep basement was now full of poisonous gas, the firemen had to run out of it.

67. *Because of* the extremely low price people were suspicious of the quality.

68. Now Mr. Kennedy could go to work with an easy mind, *because* he knew that all was well at home. (Instead of giving the reason first—"He knew that all was well, so he could go"—the reason is put last.)

69. *As* the lunch-hour was only twenty minutes long, we had to gobble our food with a rush.

70. *By working* extra hours for nothing several times a week Nelson showed that his heart was in his job. (Instead of "Nelson worked, so he showed.")

71. I ordered a very expensive meal, *to make* Culver think I had plenty of money.

If a critic of school methods supposed that the campaign against *so* was a mere matter of word-variation, he would quite miss the point of Section 3. We cannot show a literal-minded boy the way to new moulds of expression by saying, "Subordinate your thoughts; use anticipatory modifiers." We

can teach him only by giving him concrete exercise with one after another of the substitutes for *so*. When he has learned to use the word *because,* he has learned to manipulate ideas; when he learns to use a *that* clause of degree after *so,* in place of an independent clause before *so,* he has altered a portion of his brain. We cannot produce an effect on his mind by preaching general principles; we can teach new habits by requiring specific substitutes for *so*.

Our interest is far wider than overcoming one bad habit. If the *so* habit is broken up, the whole mind will be shaken out of its indifference to monotony. That is a deep and significant change. It is this revolution, this new alertness to all possibilities of better style, that we aim at.

4. Substitutes for "but"

The "but" habit is never a pervasive vice. The only reason for advising substitutes for *but* is to extend the operations against too many coordinate clauses.

The idiom that furnishes the most general substitute is a clause made with *though* or *although*. The child always arranges a contrast by beginning with an independent clause: "The officers knew that the danger was great, but they joked about it with the passengers." The first statement could be a concessive clause.

72. Though the officers knew that the danger was great, they joked about it with the passengers.

73. Although I had never seen Dr. Rowe, I felt well acquainted with him.

The phrase *in spite of* is sometimes a good variant from *but*.

74. In spite of the attractiveness of this advertisement, it doesn't make me want to buy anything.

Certain substitutes for *but* may be welcome even if they produce another kind of compound sentence. *Yet* is one excellent substitute, which seldom occurs to pupils. *While, only,* and *nor* are three others. (For examples see pages 300, 301.)

The adverbs *however* and *nevertheless* are not to be suggested, since a pupil is apt to grow too fond of them and since they may produce a pedantic effect.

5. Parallel constructions

The pupil who has no understanding of syntax can hardly imagine the parallelism of two verbs or two nouns. He feels safe only when he puts the second verb or the second noun into a separate clause. Any parallel construction of two parts of a sentence is beyond his reckoning. If he wants to report that a man made two statements, he is likely to write two sentences: "Winston said that he would not allow us to camp there. He said he would have us arrested if we didn't move on." For the pupil who writes so a new world opens when he sees the transformation wrought by a pair of noun clauses.

75. Winston said that he wouldn't allow us to camp there *and that* he would have us arrested if we didn't move on.

In this new world the second *that* clause can be expressed by a mere verb that is parallel with the first one.

76. Winston said that he wouldn't allow us to camp there *and would* have us arrested if we didn't move on.

The pupil who has never traveled beyond independent clauses will infallibly boggle by shifting subject and voice: "The superintendent of the reservation treated us cordially, *and so the afternoon was made* most pleasant for us." Two parallel verbs would straighten out the convolutions.

77. The superintendent of the reservation treated us cordially, *and so made* the afternoon most pleasant for us.

A pair of relative clauses is the recipe to cure one kind of shift from a subordinate to an independent clause: "I am looking for a shrub that doesn't need watering, *and it ought* to bloom all through the summer."

78. I am looking for a shrub that doesn't need watering *and that* will bloom all through the summer.

A pair of adverb clauses will often cure such a shift of construction as "because he stuttered, and also we were hysterical."

79. We had to laugh because he stuttered *and because* his rapid blinking made us hysterical.

The pupil who learns how to manipulate a pair of objects can avoid such a mixture as "he beat with his right foot, and the cymbals were worked."

80. He beat the bass drum with his right foot *and the cymbals* with his left.

Likewise, a pair of predicate nominatives could replace such a childish clause as "and it is also a gathering-place."

81. The small cottage that you see among the eucalyptus trees is a quiet retreat for afternoon naps *and a gathering-place* for after-dinner coffee.

Pairs of verbals can often rescue young writers from such tiresome compound sentences as are made with "and he couldn't give" (82), "and also it was whimpering" (83), "and he didn't cause a ripple either" (84).

82. He never seemed able to look me straight in the eye *and give* me a brief, definite answer.

83. Julia heard a pony stamping beyond the corral *and whimpering* as if it was lonesome.

84. Without making a single unnecessary motion *and without causing* a ripple on the surface of the water, he freed the seine from the kelp.

6. The nominative absolute

A nominative absolute (see pages 174, 201) is a noun or a pronoun, accompanied by a modifier, used without construction in the sentence to show some condition or circumstance of the verb.

85. Mark stood poised for an overhead smash, his long brown *arm* curved high over his shoulder, *racket* obliqued, rippling *muscles* tense with purpose.

The absolute is not a construction to be cultivated in school, for it is likely to be shiftless and sprawling in amateur hands. But it cultivates itself. Pupils see it everywhere, and most of them slip it into their composition with only a vague notion of what they are doing. (They would assume that *arm,* in the sentence about Mark, is a subject of *curved,* and that *muscles* is the subject of an understood *were.*) Hence the absolute is a constant source of blunders and clumsiness. The absolute must be taught in grammar classes, if only as a preventive of errors.

It can be an important and agreeable variation when used in moderation and with a sure knowledge of what the noun and its modifiers are doing. The two following sentences are evidence of the extent to which some modern authors rely on absolutes.

86. Henson had speeded up, his *voice* more piping than ever, his big right *hand* stroking nervously at his beard.

87. He fancied himself tossing the manuscript out of the train window, the *pages* scattering over the landscape—one *page,* perhaps, blowing across a pasture and frightening a horse, *others* getting caught on the barbed-wire fences, or *some* of them perhaps being sucked back under the train, the little black *letters* ground to nothingness against the black rail.

The teaching of nominative absolutes epitomizes the whole program of grammar for style. It informs pupils of what words are doing in sentences; it saves them from blundering, enables them to make idioms their servants, dignifies and enriches their composition.

Ch. 10, 11
follow up

PART TWO

AN OUTLINE OF THE STUDY OF GRAMMAR: UNDERSTANDING SENTENCES BY LEARNING ABOUT THE PARTS OF SPEECH

Part Two is an elementary course in grammar. Its purpose is to show (1) what order of topics is best, (2) what topics should be emphasized, (3) the application of each topic to composition. Part Two is limited to this one purpose of displaying the sequence and the aims that will secure the best results most economically. It does not contain many explanations of the details of syntax. A full account of all the constructions of words in sentences is given in Part Three. Part Four gives the details of the forms and classifications that are independent of use in sentences.

CHAPTER 5

VERBS

If the purpose of teaching grammar were to acquire a knowledge of the parts of speech as separate groups of facts, the order of topics would be largely a matter of indifference. We might, for example, begin with the articles because they are the simplest topic, might take interjections next because they are pleasantly emotional, might advance to coordinating conjunctions because they are few in number and uniform in function, might advance to nouns and pronouns, thence to adjectives and adverbs, and so proceed to the part of speech that is most important in syntax, the verbs.

But a knowledge of each separate part of speech is a secondary consideration in teaching the grammar that applies to composition. The purpose is to gain an understanding of the make-up of sentences. Hence the prime concern is to begin where the structure of every sentence begins and to follow such a sequence of topics as will keep opening the way to the less fundamental parts of sentences. The proper sequence of topics is vital. We must go from what is central and basic out to what is dependent and modifying.

Every sentence is based upon a verb. Therefore the most interesting and economical and logical beginning of the study of sentences is the verb. Every verb has a subject; therefore the second topic of a grammar course should be those words that are subjects of verbs: the nouns, then the words that are used in place of nouns, pronouns. The third natural topic is the modifiers of nouns and pronouns, the adjectives; then the way is clear for the other kind of modifier, the adverbs. Only after the one-word modifiers are understood is a class prepared for the modifying phrases and clauses.

If a teacher foresees, far up the grammar road, good com-

plex sentences, he will enter upon the preliminary lessons in verbs with a zest for what lies ahead.

America's greatest philologist thus defines a verb in America's largest dictionary: "A verb is a word that asserts." Philosophers could object that a verb does not assert, but is only "a word that can be used to make an assertion." Other faults can be found with the definition. There is hardly to be found in any grammar a definition that is beyond criticism. Some of the standard definitions that have been repeated in almost all texts can be shown to be illogical or false to the facts of our language. This sad truth is rather ludicrous, but need not be discouraging. It is posted here at the opening of the treatment of syntax in order to show the danger of carping at definitions that are new to us or of relying on definitions because they are familiar to us. Our purpose in choosing a definition for school use is not to be philosophically precise—though we should always prefer as much precision as we can find. Our principal purpose in selecting a definition for pupils should be to find the formula that gives the most concrete guidance for practical work.

Since a word that asserts may also express a question or a command, the usual textbook definition of a verb (probably the safest and most useful one) is this:

A verb is a word that makes a statement or asks a question or gives a command.

1. You *are* very welcome.
2. *Are* they ripe?
3. *Be* courteous to servants.

A class in elementary grammar should not feel that the opening lessons of the year are a study of a certain kind of word, the verbs. The class should see from the outset that the work is a study of sentences. The exercise should be in a selected lot of simple sentences, each of which contains only one verb, like those on page 413. The requirement is

to explore each sentence and find the heart of it, the verb. The purpose of finding verbs is to work toward an understanding of what a sentence is.

A motivation that many teachers find powerful is a statement of this sort: "Perhaps half the high-school pupils in the country do not know what a sentence is. Sometimes a third of a class of university freshmen do not know what a sentence is. You are not studying childish rudiments, but are on the way to knowledge that many college graduates never have. They wish they had it. You will be glad all your lives if you learn this year just what a sentence is."

In the search for verbs pupils should be guided by three preliminary explanations.

1. A verb may consist of one, two, three, or four words.*

4. The roof *was* red.
5. A storm *is coming.*
6. They *had been looking* for it everywhere.
7. The knife *should have been sharpened.*

Grammars often apply the term "verb phrase" to verbs of more than one word. This is not good policy in teaching, since "phrase" will be used later to describe a preposition and its object. If the word is used with two such dissimilar meanings, pupils are confused.

In preliminary work with verbs no attention should be paid to voice or mood, or to any quality except the fact that it is a verb. The aim of the recitations should be to find "the whole verb," especially when its parts are separated by intervening words, as in "They *would* surely not *have dared* to do it."

*Every verb of two or three or four words may be analyzed and shown to consist of one word that is the real verb and one or more other words that are objects or predicates after this verb. For example, we may say that in *shall give* and *did give* the *give* is an infinitive which is an object of the verb, that in *might have given* the *might* has a perfect infinitive for its object, that in *could have been given* the *given* is a participle used as a predicate adjective after the infinitive *have been,* which is the object of *could.* Such analysis is purely historical, is partially fanciful, and represents no knowledge that can be useful in school. The teaching of the analysis of verbs has been abandoned almost everywhere.

2. The converse of "the whole verb" is "and nothing but the verb." No adverb or adjective or preposition should be tolerated.

The adverb *not,* to be sure, completely reverses the meaning of the verb, but it acts from outside; it is not part of the verb. Even in contractions like *don't wish* the *n't* must be separated; the verb is *do wish.*

A predicate adjective may be inseparable in meaning from the verb, as in "Some of them were bad"; but, as a teacher discovers in many phases of grammar, the meaning of a set of words may not have any relation to the syntax. To argue from meaning to syntax is the way to ruin in school work. A predicate adjective seems so integral a part of the verb to some pupils that they can be taught only by prolonged effort to omit the adjective. The adjectives that give most trouble are *good* and *sure.*

A preposition can sometimes be logically called a part of a verb, as in "We looked at them"; and some grammarians do consider that such a preposition becomes an inseparable part of a verb. But their logic is debatable (Whitney, for example, does not follow it); the contrary reason is equally strong. And even if a teacher inclines to favor the logic, he cannot afford to. The policy of teaching is all against the logic. For the distinction between *looked at* and *looked underneath* is too subtle to be explained in school—or, for that matter, in a congress of grammarians. So if we admit that any preposition like *at* may be part of the verb, we cannot deny that any other preposition may be part of the verb. The only way to keep pupils' minds unperplexed is to insist from the outset that no preposition is part of the verb. Incidentally, there is quite as good scholarly warrant for this way of thinking as for the other.

3. No verbal is a verb. Some grammarians balk at the statement that an infinitive is not a verb, but the *Century Dictionary* says flatly, "Infinitives and participles are not verbs."

The *Century* is right, both logically and pedagogically. For infinitives and gerunds and participles do not make statements, but only imply an action.

Pupils, of course, find the distinction between verbs and verbals hard at first. They should not be expected to distinguish perfectly in the first exercise, or even in the fourth. But patience and insistence will train them before long to recognize that "the *to* words" and "the *ing* words" do not, by themselves, make assertions. A good teaching device is to talk thus: "Try to make a statement with a *to* word—'To give away all your money and then to expect me to give you my money and to be offended because'—you could write a string of *to* words as long as your arm, but could never form a sentence with them. The same is true of *ing* words. The *ing* words may be part of a verb, but cannot by themselves be verbs."

It is a convention of grammar that no infinitive with *to* is part of a verb; in "He ought to study harder" the verb is *ought,* which has the infinitive for its object. The distinction is arbitrary, but is useful as a teaching device. There are some idioms in which infinitives seem like verbs and can be distinguished from verbs only after a considerable study of verbals, as in "We saw him *peer* into the fireplace," where *peer* is a sort of objective predicate after *saw*. These subtleties should not be taken up in a recitation; no point should be made of them. If a pupil says that *saw peer* is the verb, he should be told that *saw* alone is the verb, that there are no verbs of such a type as "saw peer" or "heard fall," and that *peer* is a hard nut which may be cracked by the end of the year.

The way of handling *peer* is an illustration of good policy in many phases of grammar teaching. Time should never be spent with exceptions or oddities or mysteries. The class should be assured that it is not responsible for puzzles, but only for usual and normal constructions. Indeed a teacher

will do well to safeguard himself by announcing from time to time that he is not able to explain all curiosities of English syntax. Some of them cannot be explained. Even a seasoned teacher is likely to encounter in an innocent-looking sentence an idiom that he never thought of before and that he cannot analyze. A grammar class is not an arena for subtleties. It is a place for learning those usual facts of normal syntax that any ordinary pupil can understand if he will attend to what goes on in the recitations.

The aim of the early lessons of a course in grammar is to become familiar with those words that are an essential in every sentence, the verbs. These always consist of one, two, three, or four words; they never include any words like *not* or *soon* or *well,* like *good* or *sure* or *able,* like *up* or *on* or *by* or *in* or *at.* They are the words that assert or question or command.

CHAPTER 6

THE SUBJECTS OF VERBS: NOUNS AND PRONOUNS

A. Simple and Complete Subjects

Every verb has a subject. The subject is a noun or noun-like word or group of words about which the verb makes a statement or asks a question or gives a command. In the sentences below the subjects are italicized.

1. His *collar* was unbuttoned.
2. The *path* to the swimming-pool was now overgrown.
3. The *dangers* and *difficulties* were not realized.
4. *Others* have come to take the places.
5. *Having* hands in pockets was considered impolite in those days.
6. Not *to have been invited* was a social disgrace.
7. *At the very top* is where I want to be.
8. *What the artist means* is beyond me.

In sentence 2 the simple or bare subject is the one word *path,* which is modified by *the* and *to the swimming-pool.* The simple subject with its modifiers is called the complete subject. Grammarians commonly advise that an elementary class should begin by naming the complete subject, and should learn later to select the simple subject. Many teachers assume that this is easier for pupils, because finding the simple subject seems to involve some analysis. If a teacher was himself trained to begin with the complete subject, or if he has followed that method for a few years with his classes, he is likely to feel sure that beginning with the simple subject is harder. The truth seems to be, however, that the easier and more informing way for pupils is to require from the outset that the simple unmodified subject shall be named.

This point illustrates a highly important element in all

teaching of grammar—to wit: what a teacher is used to seems to him easier. The question of which way is easier for pupils can never be answered by inquiring which way is easier for an adult whose habits of thought have hardened into a certain form. It can be answered only by giving both ways a fair trial and observing what happens. The skilful teacher will always distrust his own prejudices and will try to discover what happens in untaught minds.

If a pupil is taught to say that "the path to the swimming-pool" is the subject, his mind is left far hazier than we imagine as to what the structure of the sentence is. If he continues for weeks to recite complete subjects, he forms a habit of grabbing up everything before the verb (a mechanically easy operation in most of the sentences of the exercise material), and so recites sleepily, without seeing anything specific in the group of words. The same comment applies with even more force to having pupils name the whole predicate. The fact seems to be that this form of exercise actually closes a pupil's mind to the make-up of a sentence. It encourages him to read up to the verb and say "subject" mechanically, then to say mechanically that all the rest of the undistinguished mass is "the predicate." The teaching of "whole subject" and "whole predicate" produces no habit of observing how the words are used in sentences.

But if a pupil is taught from the beginning to find the verb, and then to name the word that is the subject of the verb, he is learning to be alert, to use his eyes, to detect what the framework of any sentence is—the bare verb and its bare subject. He thus learns, quite easily and naturally, to separate the framework from the cluster of modifiers. He is prepared for the next great step in grammar—to enter upon the study of modifiers. But if he spends some time in the mere naming of two lumps of words, he is actually being hindered; the next step is a novelty that is obscured from him by previous mistraining. The sure steps of progress are: (1) to learn to

recognize verbs, (2) to learn to name the simple subjects of verbs, (3) to learn that a verb and its simple subject form a sentence.

That is the objective of all study of subjects—to enable pupils to see that the essence of every sentence is a verb and its subject. This fundamental fact is so significant, is so powerful in clearing up the mind of a pupil, that it becomes exciting to a discerning teacher. He can foresee a knowledge of good sentences rising up on this foundation of

{What is the verb?
{What is the unmodified subject of the verb?

He can look ahead to complex sentences in which a subject may be swathed in phrases and clauses—for example, "Any young man in these days who hopes to make a fortune that will not slip through his fingers ought to study the career of a certain manufacturer in Aurora." He can see that training in complete subjects will unfit a class to perceive what a complex sentence is; whereas training in finding the simple subject is constantly directed toward that perception.

Of course some subjects are composed of such close-knit phrases or verbals that they can be broken up only artificially. For instance, the fifth sentence at the beginning of this chapter has the bare subject *having;* but this is meaningless; *having hands in pockets* is the subject that we have to think of. So in sentence 6 the subject is meaningless unless we include *not.* We should never go to pedantic extremes in naming simple subjects; we are not bound by any iron law. But in general we insure understanding and progress by requiring the unmodified subject.

Subjects are usually nouns or pronouns, but may be verbal nouns (sentences 5 and 6) or prepositional phrases (sentence 7) or noun clauses (sentence 8). Some word is needed that will include all these noun-like words or groups. The technical term is "substantive." This would often be convenient, and some teachers venture to use it. But it has a fearsome

sound to pupils and tends to make them think that grammar is something unreal. It should be used with caution.

In preliminary grammar work no effort should be made to teach the use of verbals or phrases or clauses as subjects—except, perhaps, to exhibit such a thing occasionally. Exercises should be limited to nouns and pronouns.

B. Nouns as Subjects

A noun is a word that is used as a name.

There is no profit for junior-high-school classes in studying the kinds of nouns: common, proper, abstract, and collective. But there may be profit in showing the kinds just as a display of these words that may be subjects of a sentence. Also there is a reason for teaching proper nouns: they have to be capitalized.

Proper nouns are names of persons, places, animals, ships, roads, etc. They are recognizable by the capital letters with which they begin: *Malcolm, Mrs. Arrowsmith, Captain Duncan, Hicksville, Westminster Abbey, Scotty, Gibby, Leviathan, Newburyport Turnpike.*

Common nouns are names that are used for any one of a class of similar objects—that is, they are used "in common" for all the objects: *box, tree, stone, railroad, town, joint, story, gear, week, circle, clump.* A useful phrase in teaching the recognition of common nouns is "the kind of word that can naturally have *a, an,* or *the* before it."

Abstract nouns are names of qualities or conditions. The typical ones end in *ness: slowness, weakness, fairness, business.* Some end in *th: warmth, length, truth.* Other examples are: *heat, height, power, beauty, speed, attraction.* No clearly marked line separates abstract nouns from common nouns. For instance: is *duty* surely abstract? Is *light* something material, or is it a condition? Are *thought* and *surface* the names of things or of abstractions? It is well for a pupil to be able to recognize all these words as nouns, as names that

may be subjects of verbs; but teaching what kind of nouns they are is a waste of time.

Collective nouns are names of groups: *crowd, family, drove, flock, team, committee, faculty.*

There may well be—there has to be—preliminary exercise in recognizing the nouns in miscellaneous sentences. If this exercise degenerates into a series of grammatical questions, its value is dubious. But if it is felt by the class as learning to know "some words that may be subjects of verbs," the work is transformed. We do not study nouns as philological entities, but as the most common kind of subject. When a noun is found, the teacher can bring out the purpose of the lesson by saying, "Make a sentence in which you use this noun as the subject of a verb," and by writing the subject and verb on the board, beginning with a capital and ending with a period. "That is a sentence," says the teacher. "When a noun is used as the subject of a verb, it forms a complete sentence. When another noun is used as the subject of a verb, it forms another sentence. See this period that is between the two sentences. See the capital that begins the second sentence." The exhibit is on the board:

The car would not start. Something was wrong with the ignition.

When a class has learned that *thing* is a noun, that *something* is a noun, that *something* plus a verb forms a sentence, that the first sentence must be closed by a period, that the second sentence must begin with a capital—then a great truth has been revealed, the secret of what a comma blunder is. *A comma blunder is the use of a comma between two independent clauses that are not joined by a conjunction.* The teacher who does not know the prime importance of understanding this blunder will waste the hours that are spent on nouns; the teacher who does know it will make nouns inspiring.

C. Pronouns as Subjects

A similar statement, even more significant, applies to pronouns. The most common type of comma blunder is the one formed by a pronoun that follows a noun, refers to it, and is the subject of a second verb.

We couldn't see the top, it was hidden in clouds.

The purpose of teaching pronouns is to reveal that *it* plus a verb forms an independent sentence, which must be separated from the preceding sentence by a period or a semicolon. Only gifted, literary-minded pupils can avoid the comma sentence until they understand independent pronouns as subjects of verbs.

A pronoun is a word that stands in place of a noun.

The classes of pronouns may be displayed, not because classification signifies, but because the display leads to acquaintance with pronouns.

The personal pronouns are not so named because they apply to persons, but because they show grammatical "person"—that is, the distinction between (1) one who speaks, (2) one who is spoken to, and (3) one who is spoken about. These three forms are known technically as "first, second, and third person."

The nominative forms of the personal pronouns are *I, we, you (ye, thou), he, she, it, they.*

The demonstratives are *this, that, these, those.*

The indefinites are a miscellaneous group of words like *all, another, anyone, both, each, either, everyone, none, other, some.*

(The relative pronouns are of an utterly different sort. See the treatment of them on pages 212-226. They form modifying clauses; they are "dependent" in nature and are to be sharply distinguished from the "independent" pronouns described in this chapter. Relative pronouns are highly important in the study of complex sentences, but should not be taken up until a class has mastered the independent pronouns that make sentences.)

What has been said about exercise in recognizing all kinds of nouns applies to exercise in recognizing pronouns: such work is necessary, but not for the sake of a knowledge of one of the parts of speech. The purpose of the exercise is to make the pupil aware of a kind of word that may form an independent sentence if it is the subject of a verb.

D. Finding Subjects

A grammar may say formally that "a subject is the word about which the verb makes a predication," or it may say informally that "the subject of a sentence is that which is talked about." The formal definition gives a pupil no clue to understanding—and would not even be useful to a learned grammarian if he did not already understand subjects. The informal definition is so vague as to be untrue; for in a long and interesting sentence there may be several nouns that are "talked about," and the subject may be so obscure that it does not seem to be talked about any more than some of the articles or prepositions. What is talked about in the following sentence?

Lying in the middle of the blood-stained floor alongside the smoking revolver was one of the gorgeous red rosebuds from the mysterious garden behind Alonzo's glass-bottle wall.

A pupil finds a bewildering array of things in the sentence—a revolver, a rosebud, a garden, a "glass-bottle wall." The subject is lost from sight.

The only way in which a philologist or a pupil can detect a subject is to hunt out the verb and then to ask, "Who or what?" The subject of a verb—both in the scholarly world and in the classroom—is the word which answers the "Who or what?" question that is asked about the verb. In the sentence about the rosebud the verb is *was*. What was? The author does not say that "rosebuds was," for he writes grammatically; he says that "one was." *One* is the subject of the verb.

The only clue yet discovered by which a pupil can be trained to find the subjects of verbs is to ask "Who or what?" about the verb. The dull pupil can succeed if he faithfully uses that formula. The bright pupil who trusts to any other formula—or to no formula—will fail to understand what the framework of a simple sentence is.

The word-order "one of the buds was" is so common, and so misleading to some pupils, that it deserves special mention. The noun just before the verb is the object of the preposition, and therefore cannot be a subject. (Compare also sentences 11 and 12 below.) A pupil who understands objects of prepositions can see the ridiculousness of saying that "of the buds was." Hence some teachers find that a preliminary lesson in objects of this type saves time.

E. Subjects That Are Not Before the Verb

In the great majority of English sentences the subject precedes the verb, but there are several common ways of inverting this order.

(a) In questions the verb may come first, or the subject may be between parts of the verb.

9. Are you comfortable?
10. Have you been here long?

(b) When a sentence begins with a phrasal or participial modifier of the subject or the verb, the verb may come first (as in the sentence about the rosebud).

11. Under the gang-plank was a jelly-fish.
12. Pasted in the lower left-hand corner was a ten-cent stamp.

Untrained pupils, or pupils who have been trained in the lower grades to expect the normal order always, will heedlessly name as the subject the noun that they see before the verb; they will declare that *gang-plank* and *corner* are the subjects of *was*. But what was? A jelly-fish was, a stamp was.

(c) The most common inverted order is formed with the expletive *there*.

13. There was a *pitcher* of water on the shelf.
14. There were three broken *slats* in the blind.
15. There was *one* of these automatic sprinklers above each vat.

F. Understood Subjects

The subject of a command is sometimes expressed in an archaic style.

16. Harken ye to my words.

But in modern English the subject is seldom written. It is said to be an understood *you*.

17. (You) Lay this on his desk.
18. (You) Remember what I told you.

An inexperienced teacher, if he has dwelt on verbs and their subjects long enough to secure a tolerable recitation, will suppose that the class has pretty well mastered this fundamental of grammar. The experienced teacher will not be deceived by a temporary facility, but will plan to return for further exercise after the class has been advancing into modifiers.

CHAPTER 7

THE WORDS THAT MODIFY NOUNS AND PRONOUNS: ADJECTIVES

The typical grammar chapter on adjectives begins with a classification, then describes the attributive, predicative, and appositive positions, next explains why "feel badly" is erroneous and why "an historian" is preferred by the best people; it concludes with a dissertation on the two modes and the three degrees of comparison. The chapter can accomplish little good and may do harm.

A teacher who sees the evils of these formalities may devise an entirely different approach to adjectives. He may put on the board such a sentence as this:

1. The house was large and low—a spreading, squat, two-story oblong of dark-red brick, with a brown roof.

There are seven adjectives in action, not counting the articles. If pupils become acquainted with these words that describe the four nouns, they have at least occupied themselves in a practical way and have learned something about the English language. They may have acquired something useful for composition—but no one has ever demonstrated the usefulness.

The fact is that the study of adjectives has very little direct usefulness. If a teacher does not understand the indirect usefulness—the objective that lies far ahead and around the corner—he might almost as well take the class on a picnic as to spend a recitation period with "low modifies house, squat modifies oblong, dark-red modifies brick." Success in teaching adjectives depends on having a purpose, on foreseeing a benefit.

The purpose of teaching adjectives is to furnish an approach to all the kinds of word-groups that modify the subjects and complements of verbs. No pupil is ever going

to be master of sentences unless he first masters the modifiers that form the bulk of them. There are two kinds of modifiers, adverbial and adjectival. When a pupil understands both kinds, the structure of any sentence will become more plain to him. The work with adjectives is the first step toward the knowledge of the body of words that cluster around the framework.

A diagram will give a class a look ahead down the long vista of adjectives. Sentences are built on this plan of a framework and three groups of modifiers.

SUBJECT	VERB	PREDICATE OR OBJECT
adjective modifiers	*adverb modifiers*	*adjective modifiers*

The modifiers of the verb will be studied in due time. The other two groups of modifiers are adjectives.

Unless a class is of poor quality and the teacher timorous, an exhibit of the adjectives in some simple sentence will give a perspective of what lies ahead. The sentence might be like this:

2. This plateau back of Frye Mountain, where Joe Farrow had lived, is a remote and lonely place, above the world and near the sky.

Write the framework on a line and the adjectives below:

PLATEAU	IS	PLACE
this		*a remote*
back of Frye mountain		*lonely*
		above the world
		near the sky

If a person does not understand adjective modifiers—either by instinct or because of school training—he can never write the varied sentences that make compositions attractive, but is confined to a few monotonous patterns. If the pupil is to escape from monotony, is to be free in the realm of sentences, he must learn how to handle modifiers. He can begin by studying adjectives.

The teacher who foresees a great result from petty exercises will convey his conviction to a class. His assurance will sound in his voice and animate every question and explanation. Pupils will feel the purpose and respond to it. If a teacher feels no purpose, his best efforts will produce only listlessness and distrust.

The extent to which a teacher should try to inform a class of what lies ahead is a matter of his personality and the temperament of the class. No one can advise him. If only the view of what lies ahead is clear in his mind, he will know how to disclose parts of it at the right time.

The longest look ahead, the broadest consideration that animates the teacher, is this: that pupils are to progress to an understanding of what all words are doing in all the ordinary idioms of all the usual kinds of sentences. Much of this knowledge is humdrum, and much of it has no direct influence on sentence-improvement; but it is all necessary as a foundation. If the teacher is assured that the result will be worth while, he will not wish to evade hours of grinding matter-of-fact; and his assurance will carry a class through these hours with a cheerful momentum.

Some of the fact-grinding seems advisable in the study of adjectives. If gaps are left in the treatment, pupils will find later that there are common words of which they cannot give an account; such discovery of ignorance causes uneasiness; it should be guarded against.

So it will be advisable to begin with a definition and to have a preliminary round with the classes of adjectives, not as of use in themselves, but as a convenient assortment that shows what all adjectives are doing.

An adjective is a word that modifies a noun or a pronoun.

The most important adjectives are the descriptive kind: *large, white, rough, cheap, principal, mean, sober, kind, natural,* etc.

The most important adjective in a campaign for correctness is *good*. Vulgar speech always and everywhere employs this word as an adverb—"to play good, going good, worked good." Any pupil can learn the distinction between *good* and *well* as a dictum of grammar and can recite it glibly, but rooting out the wrong habit and cultivating the right one is a difficult achievement.

Proper adjectives are not a separate class, but are a kind of descriptive adjective that is derived from a proper noun: *English, French, Johnsonian, Alaskan.*

Pronominal adjectives are a group of words which are frequently used as pronouns: *this, those, some, each, both,* etc. If such a word is used alone in place of a noun, it is a pronoun: "Each had his share." But if it modifies a noun or a pronoun, it is an adjective: "Each one had his share."

Most pupils have difficulty in learning that a word is not, by itself, any part of speech; they feel that *each* or *both* or *saw* ought to be classifiable once and for all. The teacher must insist from the outset that use in a sentence determines what part of speech a word is. If *each* stands in place of a noun, it is a pronoun; if in some other sentence *each* modifies a pronoun, it is an adjective. *Saw* may be a verb or a noun, and might be an adjective. For nouns are very commonly used to explain other nouns, and thus are converted into adjectives: *hotel* rates, a *hat* trick, a *birthday* cake, a *cellar* window, a *saw* file. We must always see what a word is doing in a sentence; if *cellar* shows what kind of window, and *saw* shows what kind of file, they are adjectives.

The interrogative adjectives are *which* and *what* when they are used with nouns or pronouns to ask a question: "Which man do you mean? What one do you choose?"

Numeral adjectives are those that tell number: *three, ninety-nine, thousand, dozen, third, seventh.* Such words as *double, both, many* could be called numerals. Note that most numerals are frequently nouns: "A hundred of them are ready."

The articles—*a, an,* and *the*—are a kind of adjective. They are so numerous and obvious that time need not be used for reciting about them.

Recitations on adjectives must be business-like if they are to succeed. Pupils are abused if they are led to expect entertainment and artistic vistas every few minutes. But if a teacher has his eye on future results in composition, he will find chances to liven up the work by showing that adjectives are something more than classifiable words. His best chance is with the positions of adjectives. Authors do not always put adjectives in front of nouns (the "attributive" position) or after verbs as predicates (The pile looked *small*). Authors sometimes set adjectives after nouns (the appositive position).

3. The old tugboat, so *grimy* and *ill-smelling,* pushed in among the trim sloops.
4. She sat under the apple tree, *happy* to be alone once more.
5. Some of the tourists were suspicious, *afraid* of a trick.

A teacher who had the right knack of enthusiasm might swing aside from labor for a minute to point out the adjective constructions in a sentence like the following:

6. The next witness was Walter Parks, thirty years old, born in Ottawa, who had been seen near the place where the gangsters' car was ditched.

The writer did not say that the witness "was old" or "had been born"; he set the adjective and the participle down appositively beyond the nouns that they modify. He did not use separate sentences to say that "he had been seen" and that "the car was ditched," but expressed the ideas by the two adjective groups that begin with *who* and *where.*

It would take only half a minute to show that authors sometimes begin sentences with adjectives.

7. *Loud, impudent* children they were, too.
8. *Simple* as the movement seemed, it was hard to make.

A skilful teacher can give a class glimpses of how the study of adjectives is preparing for participles, phrases, and

clauses—those elements of sentences that authors use in so many ways for avoiding childish monotony. The well-equipped teacher foresees the progress through these modifiers. He understands how a knowledge of participles—those active and passive verbals which are on every page of a story—cannot be attained by a pupil who has not mastered adjectives. Phrases that modify nouns are hazy mysteries to a young writer who has not studied adjectives. Relative clauses, those modifying groups that abound in every newspaper and magazine, will never be available for the non-literary mind until it has approached them by way of adjectives and participles. The ordinary student will never be acquainted with sentences, much less will learn to improve sentences, unless he has done finger-exercises with adjectives.

CHAPTER 8

THE WORDS THAT MODIFY VERBS: ADVERBS

Grammars will be examined in vain for any hint of why a knowledge of adverbs is useful in composition. Yet the knowledge of certain adverbs is a necessity in training pupils to know the difference between one sentence and two sentences. Compare the two following groups of words:

1. About five o'clock we reached El Paso, where we changed engines.
2. About five o'clock we reached El Paso, there we changed engines.

The *where* in the first group is a conjunction that joins an adjective clause to *El Paso*. The *there* in the second group is an adverb which modifies the verb *changed;* it begins an independent statement that must be separated from the preceding statement by a period or a semicolon.

It is useless—it is educational poison—to argue that authors sometimes use such a comma before *there* to show subordination in meaning. What some authors sometimes do is not a criterion of what pupils must learn if they are to be accepted by their society as educated persons. The only guide to fitting pupils for life is what most authors do most of the time, what standard books of reference always do, what the rules of good correspondence and careful publishing always require. The standard of usage for such an adverb as *there* is to regard it as an independent modifier in the sentence and to separate it from a preceding sentence by a semicolon or a period. If a pupil does not know this, he is not acceptable in a business office or a college. He cannot know this unless he has been taught the difference between a conjunction and an adverb.

Teaching the difference between two parts of speech is a complicated task: we need the knowledge of each part before we can properly teach the other. But we must begin somewhere. The best beginning for understanding conjunctions, prepositions, and adverbs is to begin with adverbs. For these are not connecting words; they are sharply distinguished from the connectives by being independent modifiers. After a class has become somewhat familiar with adverbs, it can proceed to distinguishing them from the prepositions, which always have objects and form phrases; then the class can move to the subordinating conjunctions, which attach modifying clauses to single words.

An adverb is a word that modifies a verb, adjective, or other adverb.

The adverbs that modify verbs very commonly end in *ly: finally, slowly, naturally, feebly, heartily.* (But many *ly* words are adjectives: *cowardly, homely, manly, wifely.*) Many of the most-used adverbs do not end in *ly: now, then, there, wrong, never, fast, soon, well.*

Some adverbs that modify adjectives are: *very* slow, *so* quick, *too* short. The same adverbs may modify adverbs: *very* harshly, *so* recently, *too* rapidly.

Adverbs sometimes modify prepositions, as in "*just* at that moment, *all* along the road." Some adverbs do not modify in any explainable way.

3. *There* was nothing to be done about it.
4. *Yes,* I suppose so.

Some adverbs are interrogative.

5. *Why* are you in such a hurry?
6. *How* can it be improved?

Some adverbs are said to modify a whole statement.

7. *Perhaps* they have forgotten.
8. *Indeed* you ought to be thankful.

But there is really no such process as modifying a whole statement. The adverbs like *perhaps* and *indeed* modify the verbs.

Such adverbs as *perhaps, possibly, probably,* etc., are called "modals," but this name will accomplish nothing in teaching. The words that modify adjectives and adverbs are "adverbs of degree," but pupils will not be benefited by learning that fact. The classification of adverbs (which is given in Part Four) is more a hindrance than a help in elementary work.

To speak of "time, place, and manner" is not to name any grammatical distinction, but only the different meanings that adverbs convey. A list of adverbs that express time may be of use as a preliminary exhibit, but is of no use as an explanation of a "class." So of the adverbs of place and manner. Classification is not what pupils need. They need to learn how to recognize adverbs and how to see what words the adverbs modify.

A first-year high-school class had better be limited to the adverbs that modify verbs, and especially those that show the time, place, reason, etc., of an independent statement. The most common ones are *also, finally, here, however, now, still, then, there.* By far the most common, and therefore most important, are *then, finally,* and *now.* Others that are less common, but that are useful for exercise, are *accordingly, consequently, hence, indeed, moreover, nevertheless, perhaps, possibly, probably, therefore.*

A good form of exercise is to ask a pupil to make a sentence beginning with one of the adverbs, and to write this sentence on the board with a capital and a period. Another pupil can then recite on the adverb, saying that it modifies the verb.

Attention should be called to the fact that adverbs which modify verbs frequently come at the beginning of a sentence. There is no merit in beginning with *then, finally, however,* etc., because these words are overworked in school

composition. But a pleasing effect is often made by beginning with such adverbs as *later, often, never, soon, slowly, already, far, little.*

9. *Often* I have wondered what became of her.
10. *Already* the wind had shifted.
11. *Little* did I imagine what was going to happen next.

Untrained pupils seldom think of beginning sentences in that way. An occasional adverb at the beginning indicates good education or an instinct for style—yet the device is mechanically easy to learn.

When such a sentence as "Then we studied adjectives for two days" has been put on the board, a pupil may be asked to invent a sentence that could go before it—such as "For three days we studied nouns and pronouns." The teacher can then bring out the meaning of the period before *then* by a series of questions and statements: "What is the verb in the first group of words? What is the subject of the verb? What is the verb in the second group? What is the subject of it? So we have two separate sentences. What mark must be used at the end of the first sentence? What is *then* in the second sentence? What does it modify? An adverb like *then* or *now* or *finally* often begins a new sentence. It must be written with a capital. There must be a period before it. To use a comma before *then* would cause a comma blunder. This is the most childish mistake in composition. Why are we studying adverbs? Yes, we are learning to avoid blunders. Also we are on our way to improving sentences by using adverbs and adverb phrases and adverb clauses."

This chapter has thus far been describing the principal purpose of teaching adverbs in an elementary class—say in the eighth year. In a later year there should be a more complete study, if a school can find the time and if a teacher appreciates the purpose of further study. The purpose is this: to enable pupils to see all the adverbial constructions in ordinary sentences, as part of a program of giving them a complete

knowledge of the uses of all kinds of words. The usefulness is indirect, but is valuable. So long as a pupil has only a partial knowledge of the constructions of words, he is self-distrustful and timid; sentences remain a jungle of unexplainable mysteries. But when he knows that he can go through any newspaper paragraph and explain what work each word is doing, he has a confidence that makes him feel at home in his language, that clears up the jungle, that converts it to an orderly plantation where he is the supervisor and can manage things as he likes. This assurance gives him a sense of being a master of words; it produces a power that is never acquired by the pupil whose knowledge is incomplete. We cannot secure the power by singling out those parts of syntax that we want to use directly; for direct use is often dependent on a fulness of knowledge that applies indirectly. The study of grammar may be compared to a branch of science. If a chemist or a biologist should say, "I will study only what I can apply to making life pleasanter," he would be a laughing-stock in his profession; he would fail unless he first secured a detailed knowledge of his field. The student of grammar will fumble in his applications to composition unless he has a foundation of thorough knowledge of all the elements of the structure of sentences.

After a class has studied phrases, it can return to learn more clearly how adverbs differ from prepositions. After it has studied subordinate clauses, it can return to see how adverbs differ from conjunctions. Adverbs cannot be mastered, once and for all, as a separate subject, but only by review and comparison after other subjects are understood. An illustration is the word *before*. A pupil might learn its adverbial use in "I had never seen it before," but he will not be an assured master of it until he knows that it is a preposition in "rising before daylight" and a conjunction in "turning back before it was too late." A pupil will not be acquainted with clauses of comparison (which are sometimes a good

substitute for artless compound sentences) until he knows about such adverbs as *so, as,* and *more.*

12. The wind was *so* strong *that we had to close the windows.*
13. I took *as* much *as I dared.*
14. This was a *more* difficult job *than I had expected.*

Preliminary lessons in adverbs center on their use as modifiers of verbs, modifiers that frequently begin independent sentences. Later lessons will show their other uses and the distinctions between them and the connective words.

CHAPTER 9

THE WORDS THAT MAKE PHRASES: PREPOSITIONS

A preposition cannot be defined in terms that mean anything to a person who is not already familiar with prepositions. A teacher who is introducing this part of speech to a class must begin with examples. Suppose that he starts with this sentence:

1. She stared at me with a look of wonder.

He may talk thus to the class: "You see this little word *at*. It is placed before the pronoun *me*. We say that *me* is the object of *at*. The combination of the two words, *at me,* is used like one word to show where she stared. The combination is like an adverb modifying *stared*. Here is another word, *with,* that is used in the same way. It has a noun, *look,* for its object; the combination, *with a look,* tells how she stared; it is like an adverb that modifies *stared*. You can see that *of* is the same kind of word. It has an object, *wonder;* the combination, *of wonder,* is like an adjective that modifies the noun *look*. The name of these little words that take objects and form modifiers is *preposition*. The name of the combination of a preposition and its object is *phrase*."

Pupils always enjoy saying "object of." They have a passion for declaring that any word after a verb is "the object of" the verb. There seems to be a pleasure for them in the activity of "object of." When a teacher is first presenting prepositions, he should play up this charming trait of the little words that make phrases: they always have an object.

From the outset the class is taught that the difference between an adverb and a preposition is that a preposition has an object. Many words are used both as prepositions and

adverbs. If *by,* for example, has an object, it is a preposition, as in the following sentence:

2. He walked by the door several times.

But if there is no object, *by* is an adverb.

3. He walked by without looking at me.

An adverb is a modifying word; but a preposition is not; it works with its object to form a modifier.

This modifier is called a phrase. It is well to restrict the term "phrase" to this one meaning, for otherwise the term will have no meaning. All grammars define "phrase" as a group of words, not containing a verb, that is used like a single word; "phrase" is applied to any kind of verbal or substantive or modifying cluster of words. When used so indiscriminately it has no meaning that is useful in elementary classes; it becomes a mere repository for ignorance. All phrases except the prepositional kind can be analyzed into separate words that have their separate uses in the sentence, and must be so analyzed before they are in the least understood. If a class is allowed to call any mass of words a "phrase," it is trained not to see what words do in sentences. If the term is restricted to prepositional phrases, it has one definite and useful meaning.

The formal definition of a preposition—if a teacher wants it—is this:

A preposition is a word that has some substantive for an object and that forms with its object a modifying phrase.

Of course the purpose of studying prepositions is to become aware of modifying phrases and of what they modify. Often it is difficult to be sure of what a phrase does modify. In "She stared with a look of wonder in her eyes" what does *in her eyes* modify? A pupil would naturally say that the phrase modifies the word next it, *wonder.* Possibly that is the right answer; possibly the writer thought of "wonder

in her eyes." But more likely the noun *look* is modified by two phrases: an *of* phrase that tells what kind of look, an *in* phrase that tells where the look was. Time should never be wasted in debating such subtleties; a teacher should always accept any explanation that might conceivably be true; the pupil should be encouraged to feel that his opinion may be valid.

The pupil is to be overruled only when his opinion is obvious nonsense. Suppose that a heedless pupil is reciting about "We were waiting on the curb in the meantime." He sees a convenient word next to the *in* phrase and is likely to say that the phrase modifies *curb*. But what could "a curb in the meantime" mean? The sentence tells where we waited (on the curb) and when we waited (in the meantime). Both phrases modify the verb.

If a phrase tells time or place, the chances are at least ten to one that it modifies a verb. The phrases that are of most use in composition modify verbs. It is these modifiers of verbs that we want to cultivate—especially those that begin sentences.

4. For the next few minutes we were very much worried.
5. By the end of the hour the audience was almost asleep.
6. At my right sat a blind girl.

The untrained pupil seldom thinks of beginning a sentence with a preposition; his tendency is always to begin with the subject: "We were very much worried for the next few minutes." When he learns to transfer some of these modifiers of verbs to the initial position, his style is much improved. The teacher who foresees this goal of the work in prepositions will direct recitations with interest and conviction. The teacher who does not foresee will either be languid or merely intent on solving puzzles.

Another use of studying phrases that modify verbs is the same as with adverbs: to learn that they are modifiers which begin independent sentences—as in sentences 7, 8, and 9.

7. Mr. Sumner grew more impatient every minute. *At last* he could control himself no longer.
8. I rather like it; *in fact,* I am quite fond of it.
9. There is nothing else. *At least* I can't think of anything.

The phrases are not grammatical connectives (that is, are not conjunctions), but are like the adverbs *then, now,* and *finally;* they begin independent statements that must be separated by periods or semicolons.

If a teacher wishes to train a class not to use *like* as a conjunction, he must begin by emphasizing it as a preposition. *Like* has an object; it forms phrases that usually modify the verb: looked like rain, acted like a soldier, seems like a pleasant person.

The clue to what a phrase modifies is to ask "What?" about the phrase. Suppose that a pupil is reciting on the first phrase in "By the end of the hour the audience was almost asleep." He is to ask, "What by the end of the hour?" If he has not had considerable practice, he is almost sure to prefer a noun or an adjective for the answer—"audience by the end" or "asleep by the end." His attention must be directed to the verb, for two reasons. In the first place, nearly all phrases of place or time modify verbs. In the second place, the phrases that can be put first in a sentence—the phrases that are useful for improving style—are modifiers of the verb. When we train a pupil to see that *by the end* modifies *was,* we are fitting him to manipulate phrases to good purpose. Pupils must be continually urged to think first of the verb when they seek the modified word (see page 264). The typical pupil who is reciting about the phrase in "At my right sat a blind girl" is likely to feel satisfied with "a blind girl at my right." Ask him where the girl sat; insist that phrases of place and time usually modify a verb; tell him to try the verb in this case; show him that "sat at my right" is the answer that is expected in the grammar world. No teacher ever went too far in

encouraging a class to suspect and try out the verb when seeking the modified word.

Yet some caution is necessary. There are phrases of place and time that modify nouns: "the panel in the wall, the clock on the mantel, a luncheon at noon." Such modifiers are somewhat freakish; we are tempted to say that they modify a verb in an unexpressed relative clause: "the panel that was in the wall," etc. Pupils should come to think of them as exceptional. They should always expect a phrase of place or time to modify a verb.

There are many peculiar uses of phrases, which are all fully explained in Chapter 21. Preliminary lessons should not be concerned with these oddities; but a teacher should be informed about them, so as to avoid confusion in class.

Teachers should be forewarned of the special difficulties that *with* furnishes. It is often used in utterly vague senses, not modifying anything in particular, to indicate all manner of circumstance, condition, reason, etc.—for example: "With knowledge increasing by leaps and bounds, we have to rely on specialists. With these remarks made, it will be best to turn to another subject." Usually these aimless phrases must be said to modify the verb: *with knowledge* gives the reason for having to rely; *with remarks* indicates why it will be best to turn. If pupils have difficulty in discovering what a *with* phrase modifies, explain that they ought not to puzzle their readers by using *with* in such troublesome ways. Every pupil will profit by being taught to beware of *with*.

Phrases made with *of* usually modify nouns. They are so common that they form a fourth to a third of all the phrases on a page of ordinary printed matter. They are so easily recited that they may be disregarded after a class has become acquainted with them.

In general it is true that the phrases which modify verbs are the ones we need for composition, the ones on which all interest should be centered. After a preliminary lesson

or two a teacher may do well to assign exercise in selecting only the phrases that modify verbs. He may well go a step further and assign only those phrases that do not directly follow the verb. He should put special emphasis on those that come first in the sentence. He can do good work by training a class to transpose phrases to the beginnings of sentences.

It is possible for him to overdo this work. He will overdo it if he allows pupils to think that they always improve a sentence when they shift a phrase to the beginning. Good teaching will keep a class aware that beginning with phrases is a good device only for variety, and only when the phrases sound natural. The class needs an occasional reminder that a change of the following sort is ludicrous:

{Hogan then stepped quickly to the rear of the car.
{To the rear of the car Hogan then stepped quickly.

But a sensible teacher, dealing with fairly sensible pupils, will never do harm by encouraging the transposition of phrases for variation. When he has for five years seen the enlightenment which comes to a class that has mastered prepositional phrases, he wonders how any class can progress in composition without this training. After he has been for twenty years familiar with the substitution of phrases for "and" and "so" sentences, he marvels that there can still be in the world any debate about what "functional grammar" is. The study of phrases reaches far beyond the simple sentences in which they are first studied. It extends to those complex sentences in which subordinate clauses are attached to the objects of prepositions—thus:

10. Or think of a fellow like *Anson Blake, who has brought happiness to more than a hundred homes this winter.*

Such word-groups are impenetrable mysteries to the ungrammared pupil. The trained pupil can manipulate them with assurance. He becomes a freeman in the kingdom of sentences.

CHAPTER 10

THE VERBAL ADJECTIVES: PARTICIPLES

A verbal is a form of the verb that is used like an adjective or a noun. The adjective verbals are called "participles"; the noun verbals are called "gerunds" and "infinitives." They have many forms and a wide variety of uses. Indeed if a ninth-year pupil were confronted with a complete scheme of participles, gerunds, and infinitives, his heart would fail; he would suppose that he was about to be lost in the maze. Even if he had hopes of mastering the intricacies and emerging alive, he would not dream of learning anything useful in the labyrinth. And he would not derive a particle of benefit from a long confinement there if a teacher showed him nothing but the categories of tense, voice, and constructions.

It is a pathetic and terrifying thought that in thousands of classrooms every year a multitude of young Americans go drearily through present participles and perfect participles and dangling participles and participial nouns and pluperfect infinitives—go with their eyes on the ground and torpor in their hearts, learning nothing that is worth remembering, seeing nothing that applies to their own composition. If the study of verbals were only such a laborious routine amidst forms and classifications, it should be abolished by the Child Welfare Commission.

And if it were just a bright theory that pupils might be helped by a familiarity with verbals, teachers should put no trust in the theory. No school can afford to risk its costly months of time on a hypothetical hope of a benefit that is not guaranteed.

But the hope has been verified in the work of innumerable teachers who can demonstrate every step of a program

that extends from "active participle in *ing*" to the writing of leaders for a journalism class. "I discovered years ago," a teacher of journalism once reported, "that my class was hampered in writing good leads because it did not understand participles; I wanted to give lessons in participles right then; but the supervisor of English would not permit such an operation; my class had to stumble along in ignorance." This teacher's deep feeling about participles will seem mysterious only to readers who lack her experience. Some illustration of the reasons for her feeling are given later in this chapter.

A. Active Participles

The pupil who does not understand active participles will use them wrongly, thus botching his composition; he will not be able to mature his style by substituting them for independent clauses. He can easily learn about them. There is nothing mysterious or intricate in active participles for the pupil who attacks them directly, without being involved in the philosophy of the general nature of all verbals.

Rather early in his attack a definition may be helpful, but at first he should be led up to some participles, taught to handle them familiarly, made acquainted with them as common objects in the pages of the stories that he reads. Participles like these could be put on the board:

a rushing stream
a shining surface
the fluttering flags
some quivering leaves
a barking dog
an exciting story
sparkling water
many shouting children
those blazing logs

The *ing* words indicate actions; they let us know that the stream was rushing, that the surface was shining, that flags were fluttering, etc.; they are somewhat like verbs. But they are not verbs, for they do not make statements. They are used like adjectives, showing what kind of stream, what kind of surface, what kind of flags. So they may be called

verbal adjectives. Indeed there are some of them which are so commonly used as adjectives that we forget that they are made from verbs: "an interesting play, a charming person, a winning smile, an encouraging sign, an amazing fact."

Verbal adjectives are called "participles," from a Latin word that means half-breed; they are a cross between verbs and adjectives.

A participle is a word, or group of words, that is formed from a verb and is used like an adjective.

A participle indicates that the word which it modifies is performing the action: a wailing woman is a woman who is wailing. But the wailing wall at Jerusalem is not making a sound; it is a place for wailing; wailing is a gerund that shows what the wall is used for. (See pages 95, 278.) The distinction should seldom be made in class, for it is difficult and almost useless. But the teacher must be prepared to explain it in an emergency.

The *ing* participles are called active participles. When they are used directly before the modified nouns, they are no harder to understand than ordinary adjectives like *good* or *bright*. They seem much less like adjectives when they follow the noun.

the stream, rushing through a narrow gorge
its surface, shining like a waxed floor
a thousand flags, fluttering in the light breeze

In this position they seem more like verbs, for they are more detached and indicate action more strongly. But they could not be verbs unless they were combined with *is, was, are, am,* etc. They are mere modifiers that indicate an action without asserting it.

The pupil who does not understand the difference between a verb and a participle is always in danger of mistaking a verbless group of words for a sentence: "Not knowing what else to do, and being afraid to ask for infor-

mation." Such an error is known as the "half-sentence fault." The only economical way to eradicate this fault from composition is to teach the difference between a verbal and a verb.

An introduction to participles might be made by putting on the board a sentence like this, in which the participles could be underlined:

1. Annie stood at the wheel, *guiding* the tug-boat with steady hands, *watching* each *advancing* wave, *turning* a little aside from one, *meeting* another head-on—and so *working* her way gradually southward down the coast.

A series of questions and statements like the following could start a class on the way to a knowledge of these detached modifiers: "This is a simple sentence in which there is only one verb. What is the verb? Who stood at the wheel? Then we see that the framework of the sentence is 'Annie stood.' What was she doing as she stood at the wheel? Yes, she was guiding the tug-boat. But you notice that the author did not say 'was guiding'; he did not use a verb; he merely put into his sentence a verb-like word that showed what the subject was doing. It is a kind of modifier of Annie; it is a sort of adjective. What else was Annie doing? Yes, she was watching. Tell about the word *watching*. What kind of wave was it? From what verb does *advancing* come? Why is *turning* not a verb? Describe how it is used in the sentence. Tell how *meeting* is used. Tell how *working* is used."

The chief purpose of a recitation on participles is to show how they are used—that is, what noun or pronoun they modify. We find the modified word just as we find the subject of a verb, by asking, "Who or what?" Who was turning? Who was meeting?, etc.

Participles are enough like verbs to be able to take objects. In this sentence we see objects of *guiding, watching, meeting,* and *working*. Participles have the same sort of modifiers

that verbs have: *with steady hands, aside, head-on, gradually, southward.* Participles, we see, have a strong resemblance to verbs. But they lack the one great quality of verbs: they do not make statements.

"Well," a bright pupil might ask, "what of it?" As information about the English language this showing of participles may have some interest, but what can pupils do with the information? The answer is: "Make sentences once in a while like the one about Annie." No untrained student, who lacked a literary gift, ever did make such a sentence. The grammarless pupil is limited to forms like "She stood at the wheel, *and she* guided." He knows only how to make a statement, *and then* to follow it with another statement hooked on by a tiresome "and."

Improvement in school composition is largely a process of learning how to avoid formless compound sentences and to substitute for them simple or complex sentences. One of the easiest substitutes for the "and" form is an active participle that modifies the subject, instead of a verb that makes a separate statement about another subject. A literary critic might think this an insignificant alteration. So it is—as far as any one sentence is concerned. But when it becomes a way of *breaking up monotony,* it has deep significance in the life of the average pupil; it is a revolution in mental habits. That is the meaning of participles in education—the escape from childish uniformity to an adult variety.

An active participle often precedes the subject.

2. *Wondering* what the noise was all about, I stepped into the hall.

The pupil who has grown up without any consciousness of sentence forms, without any conception that he sounds dull if he does not use a variety of forms, is almost sure to write a "so" sentence about stepping into the hall: "I wondered what the noise was all about, so I stepped into the hall."

His dominant habit of composition is to begin with a subject and verb, append a short group of words, then hook on another subject and verb with "so" or "and." This habit permeates all his mental efforts. It cannot be broken up by any general advice, but only by specific remedies for the "so" and the "and" that are devitalizing his composition. One of the remedies is active participles that precede the subject.

Imagine the kind of work done by a teacher who is not anticipating any particular result from the recitations on participles. He might as well be dealing with a list of all the Pharaohs. Verbals are, for him, just one mummy after another. If he knew that participles were to rescue the class from babyish sentences, they would seem as alive as a modern Captain of Industry.

Yet pupils must not be allowed to think (as they will think unless they are repeatedly warned away from the idea) that there is virtue in any one sentence because it contains a participle. A compound sentence made with "and so I stepped" may be, in itself, as good a sentence as the one that begins with *wondering*. In fact, it might sometimes be better; for there are pupils who grow so fond of beginning with participles that they make composition monotonous with this kind of verbal. What is more, the detached participle may be so loose and vague in meaning that it forms a weak sentence—"Not studying faithfully, he was put on probation." There is no merit in the use of a participle unless it gives variety amidst the other sentences. Variety, not a participial construction, is what the grammar lessons aim at.

B. Passive Participles

There need be no fear that a pupil will grow too fond of passive participles. These are forms ending in *d, t, n,* etc., which show that the modified word is acted upon: "a mended net, a lost coin, a woven strand, struck by the ball, sung in unison."

A passive participle may be effective at the beginning of a sentence.

3. *Frightened* by the strange sound, Lindsey halted.

Usually the best use is in an appositive position.

4. The *Vicar of Wakefield,* probably *written* in 1764, was not published till 1766.

5. A single spike, *driven* into a rotten beam, was all that supported me.

Unless a person has spent some years amidst the ruck of high-school sentences, he cannot conceive how refreshing such a type of sentence is in a theme. The ordinary pupil is limited to the compound type: "A single spike was driven into a rotten beam, *and this* was all that supported me." When he has learned to use occasionally a passive participle in an appositive position, he is a new creature—not because he knows this particular variation, but because he has entered upon the way to all variations.

Passive participles are a part of passive verbs. In "The nail was driven" we might say that *driven* is used like a predicate adjective after *was.* Sometimes a passive participle is unmistakably felt as a kind of adjective: "We were *tired* of doing nothing. We were *lost* in the woods." But the same participles may seem like parts of a verb in other sentences: "We *were tired* by his constant repetitions. The key *had been lost* by Tony." To distinguish between these two uses of a participle is a refinement that perplexes without accomplishing anything. The convenient formula for school purposes is "Call the participle a part of the verb whenever there is doubt."

C. Tenses

An active participle of one word is said to be in the present tense, though it often indicates a time previous to the time of the verb.

6. *Hearing* some voices in the next cabin, I listened intently.

That is, after I had heard, I listened. If we wish to show clearly that the time of the hearing was previous to the time of the listening, we may use a perfect participle.

7. *Having heard* some voices, I listened.

Sometimes a present participle is slovenly and absurd, as in "Working all night, I needed sleep." The perfect participle should be used.

8. *Having worked* all night, I needed sleep.

Passive participles also have a perfect form: *having been kept, having been warned.* Pupils should learn to recognize these word groups as participles, but should not be required to analyze them as tense forms. The study of tenses is a complication that makes participles seem mysterious, and so does more harm than good.

There are two purposes that should receive all the emphasis in recitations: (1) to show that participles are not verbs, that a word-group like "never having seen in my life anything so gruesome" is not a sentence; (2) to show that participles always modify—that is, relate to and belong with—some noun or pronoun.

Nom. [illegible] - two subjects, 1 verb, 1 part.

CHAPTER 11

THE VERBAL NOUNS: GERUNDS AND INFINITIVES

It might seem that the study of the noun-like verbals would be simplified if they were not divided into two classes, for the one term "infinitive" can properly include both gerunds and infinitives. Perhaps the grammarians would have made the study easier if they had not used any formal names and had spoken simply of "verbal nouns." But almost universal custom teaches the two classes and the two names; therefore a teacher who avoided these formalities would be putting his pupils out of line with the training that most high-school graduates have had. Moreover, the division into two classes can be made helpful if it is used as a mere convenient way of assorting a number of facts in order to look at them one at a time, with more ease.

The noun-like verbals seem to be less important than the participles for varying sentence-patterns: they are less conspicuous; they cannot so often be substituted for independent clauses. But they are a notable element in a firm style. The pupil who becomes familiar with them receives a benefit which, though it may not be striking at the time, increases later in life.

If a pupil does not become familiar with gerunds and infinitives, he is hampered in a way that is not realized by an impatient teacher who looks for immediate results: he is at the mercy of words that he does not understand, timorous about all words because some of them remain mysterious. If he is forever encountering words that are inexplicable, he is forever conscious that he does not understand his language. But when he knows that no class of words is inexplicable to him, he is assured that he is a master of his

language. Hence it comes about that the work with the noun-like verbals, though much of its fruitfulness is indirect, is indispensable. The teacher who is on intimate terms with verbals, who knows what living and interesting things they are, will convey the life and interest to a class.

A. Gerunds

Some writers who secure pleasing effects with gerunds, but who have never noticed how they use them, would deny that the study of these verbals can help pupils in composition. "I don't know what a gerund is," some essayist may boast, "and I have never felt the need of knowing. Why inflict them on children?" This way of talking about grammar is fallacious and wrong-headed—as if a chef should say: "I make artistic pastry without knowing the chemistry of carbonic-acid gas; why should a teacher of domestic science explain baking-powder to children?" The chef may not know about bicarbonate of sodium in such a way that he could recite in a chemistry class, but his knowledge is complete and accurate within the range of his cookery. The essayist may not know about gerunds in such a way that he could recite on them in a grammar class, but he knows all about them for composition purposes. He is sensitive to the difference between the ramshackle compound sentences of untaught pupils and the workmanlike sentences that the same pupils can learn to make with gerunds—like these:

1. The gangster was accused of *furnishing* the dynamite, *hiring* the men, and *instructing* them how to use it.
2. It seems to me that they don't aim at *training* us to write like human beings, but only at *teaching* us to be very correct.
3. After much *experimenting* he found that by *changing* the position of his feet and *using* a chop stroke he could avoid *batting* so many balls to right field.

Any critic would recognize the difference between that third sentence and the following compound type: "He experimented a great deal, and he changed the position of

his feet. He used a chop stroke, so he did not bat so many balls to right field." How can the writer who is enslaved to such "and" and "so" sentences be taught a better style? Mere exhortation will accomplish nothing. Mere showing of good models will accomplish very little. The ideal way to teach would be to familiarize the pupil, for many years, with all the types of simple and complex sentences; then he could acquire the art of compacting and subordinating ideas without ever knowing the names of the devices he used. This process would be similar to the training that a mind with an instinct for style is forever giving itself. But it is a purely ideal and resultless process if attempted with the average pupil, in actual school conditions, when the needed years have already been wasted, when incentive is lacking, when the mind contains no store of models. In American schools today, amidst the conditions that confront practical teachers, only one way has been discovered to rescue young people from their childish sentences: to teach them how to convert independent clauses into dependent elements.

The only economical way to teach the making of good sentences is to begin by explaining the subordinate parts of simple sentences. Adjectives and adverbs are naturally the first of these to be taken up; next come the adjective and adverb phrases made with prepositions; then we are prepared for the adjective modifiers formed from verbs. The noun-like verbals are now in order—the gerunds and infinitives.

A gerund is a word ending in *ing* that is formed from a verb and is used like a noun.

4. *Sending* one man to prison deters others from *attempting* crime.
5. I enjoy *spending* an hour in the *bowling* alley.

The reason why *bowling* is a gerund should be clearly understood by a teacher, so that he may explain it if the need arises; but he will seldom have to speak of it and

should never discourse upon it. Just as nouns may become adjectives when they modify nouns (a *fountain* pen, a *house* party, a *chair* factory), so gerunds may be used as adjectives when they are put before nouns to show what the nouns are used for: a *writing* table, a *fishing* schooner, a *visiting* period. These *ing* words do not show that the table was writing or that the schooner was fishing; therefore they are not participles. They are gerunds.

The definition of a gerund as "a noun-like word that ends in *ing*" is the common one, the useful one in an elementary class. But it is not complete; for there are gerunds of two or three words that do not end in *ing: having furnished, having been held.* The two-word gerunds are not very common in school composition and should not be encouraged, though a perfect tense like *having furnished* is often more exact than *furnishing.* A three-word gerund is likely to sound stilted even in literature.

Some grammarians attempt to distinguish between gerunds that are obviously verbals and gerunds that have become pure nouns. For instance, they argue that in "useful for making a living" *making* is a gerund, an obviously verb-like word; whereas *living,* they say, is a pure noun because it does not suggest an act of living, but is merely an abstract noun like *existence.* Some grammarians go further and say that if a verbal noun is preceded by an article (the playing, a groaning) it is not to be considered a gerund. Still other grammarians advise us to determine whether "the verbal sense predominates" before we call a word a gerund. No such refinement has any validity in the philosophy of grammar, much less in the strategy of the classroom. Teachers cannot establish—for themselves or for pupils—any such fanciful line of demarcation. The only feasible way of dealing with gerunds is to stick to the plain definition: "derived from a verb and used like a noun." That formula establishes the plain knowledge that can be used in school. Any effort to

set up metaphysical distinctions will end in a haze of bewilderment.

Of course there are a few nouns that have been derived from verbs and that have turned into full-fledged nouns, which may have plurals: *palings, buildings, earnings, greetings,* a *clipping,* some *netting.* Nothing need be said of these unless some inquisitive pupil raises a question. Let an argumentative pupil call *greetings* a gerund if he wants to; applaud him for his cleverness. But suggest that, as a matter of fact, the learned world would give a majority vote for calling the word a noun. Say no more about it. Scholastic tweedledums are not the objective of a study of gerunds. We are simply teaching those *ing* words that are made from verbs and used like nouns. We are keeping our eyes on the improved sentences that can be produced when verbals are all understood.

Gerunds may be the subjects or objects of verbs. The most common construction that helps a pupil to frame mature sentences is as object of a preposition. Instead of his instinctive compound form ("I walked along a different street every afternoon, so I soon learned all about the town") he can use a phrase:

6. *By walking* along a different street every afternoon I soon learned all about the town.

"A gerund in apposition" may not sound uplifting to a theorist who orates about expressing personality, but it produces results that no theorizer ever approximates.

7. There was a soft, chime-like sound, a gentle *calling* that waked us gradually.

Orations about "clear thinking" leave sentences quite unchanged in their childishness; the application of a knowledge of verbal nouns can beautify style. Only gifted pupils will absorb verbals from their reading. Until the ordinary pupil is informed about this portion of his language, he cannot

use it; he is limited to barren independent clauses; he must write in a barren style. Definite instruction is the only mode of making graces flourish where there is no literary subsoil.

Also it is worth considering that a high-school graduate who does not understand gerunds must see the sentences of literature through a distorting fog of ignorance. He is dimly aware of verb-like words, but cannot see what an author is doing with them.

He cannot express his own ideas with confidence until he knows what gerunds are. Since a verbal noun is very verb-like, he mistakes it for a verb and supposes that a word-group like this forms a sentence: "By *raking* the ground frequently and *keeping* the surface from *baking* into a hard crust." The average pupil cannot avoid this sort of half-sentence fault until he understands verbals, and he will not understand verbals until he has made a study of each kind—participles, gerunds, and infinitives.

B. Infinitives

An infinitive is the simple form of the verb, usually preceded by *to*, that is used like a noun.

This is the standard definition given in various phrasings by most grammarians. All dictionaries define an infinitive as a noun-like form of the verb. Yet nearly half of the infinitives in literature are modifiers: "rooms *to rent*, easy *to remember*, climbed *to see*." Some elementary grammars therefore put this fact into their preliminary definition and say that an infinitive is a verbal which is used as a noun, an adjective, or an adverb! There are two reasons why such a definition is inadvisable: (1) It opposes all the dictionaries and all the large grammars. (2) It is so all-inclusive that it is meaningless and confusing to pupils; it asserts that an infinitive is such a three-natured monster as is not met with elsewhere in grammar. The definition should be in terms

of a noun-like use. The modifying uses are prepositional phrases in which the infinitive is the object of *to,* equivalent to "rooms for renting," etc. See the full explanation that begins on page 290.

Infinitives may be composed of three or four words, to show perfect tense or passive voice: *to have seen, to be done, to have been shot.*

The constructions of infinitives are so numerous, and sometimes so obscure, that a poorly equipped teacher might well despair of ever leading a class to an understanding of them. What is more, a thorough study might be so conducted by an unimaginative teacher that it would result in no benefit. Incompetent teaching of infinitives will not produce any good effect in composition. But if the pupil is guided by easy steps to the useful phases of knowledge, if he learns how to apply what he knows, he will be saved from embarrassing errors and will discover several of the ways in which he can make his style more like an author's.

He should begin by seeing some infinitives at work in short and commonplace sentences.

8. *To transplant* a twenty-foot tree is quite a feat.
9. We wanted *to encourage* him.
10. Here's an idea—*to split* the chunks with a wedge.
11. It is hard *to hold* your breath for a hundred seconds.
12. My plan was *to spread* a coating of sand on the clay.

No study of infinitives—not even a preliminary one—can be made by a class that does not understand the constructions of nouns. If a pupil knows about subjects, objects, predicate nominatives, and appositives, he can see that the italicized words are used like nouns: *to transplant* is the subject of *is; to encourage* is the object of *wanted; to split* is in apposition with *idea; to hold* is the true subject of *is* (*it* is a mere grammatical or "dummy" subject); *to spread* is a predicate nominative after *was.*

If a class went no further than this, if the teacher did

no more than impress the fact that infinitives are not verbs, much would have been accomplished. For then any pupil would be prepared to see why the following group of words is not a sentence: "Just enough to keep the tree alive, but not enough to cause rapid growth." Such half-sentence faults are frequently made, even in college composition, by students who have not definitely learned that an infinitive is not a verb. Especially is an infinitive in apposition likely to cause an ignorant pupil to blunder. If he knew that infinitives often work in pairs, he could write thus:

13. I wanted *to keep* free from all these outside activities, *to save* every minute of my time for study.

If he does not know about infinitives, he is likely to regard the second one as a verb, and so to write it with a capital after a period. When an author deliberately indulges in such a verbless sentence, he is conscious of wanting that effect; his style proves to a reader that the effect was intended. But in the pupil's theme it stands out as a mere illiterate mistake. Similar mistakes cannot be eradicated by any general advice about using verbs, but only by some experience with infinitives.

How far any teacher should advance into the tulgy wood of infinitives will depend on the amount of time at his disposal, his knowledge of this kind of verbal, his experience in teaching the complications, and his faith in results. Any teacher should be willing to experiment, but no teacher should venture on the whole program of infinitives until he has gradually acquired conviction by experience. All the constructions are explained in Part Three. A teacher may well look over the whole territory and estimate how much of it he will try to cover.

The teacher who tries to decide the infinitive question as a detached problem is judging with his eyes shut. He can make a fair decision only by opening his eyes to the facts

of literature. If he examines ten pages of miscellaneous books and periodicals, he will see that all authors secure agreeable variations with infinitives, and that the pupil who remains unable to imitate some of these devices is, to that extent, undeveloped. If a class is backward, the teacher may wisely decide to limit himself to rudiments and to omit most of the work with infinitives. But if the class is well-grounded and ambitious, he may with equal wisdom decide to spend some time with these noun-like words that are so frequently employed to good purpose by authors.

The following quotations exhibit the most common ways in which authors use infinitives to form sentence-patterns that would be beyond the reach of ordinary pupils who had not studied infinitives. Notice especially the parallel constructions, which most pupils can imitate, but which very few pupils could ever attain without definite instruction.

14. *To flatter* strangers is an easy task, but *to flatter* our intimate friends is dangerous and unpleasant.

15. He went there *to live* in a dry climate and *to be* near his best friend.

16. My plan was *to make* the town see itself, *to get* it to recognize itself as no better than the corrupt big cities.

17. It is indeed a strange art *to take* these words, *touch* them to their finest meanings, *restore* them to their primal energy.

18. I had told him not *to be* in a hurry about it, but *to make* his popularity secure first.

19. Only one obligation rests on him—*to keep* well away from the stations occupied by the professional observers.

20. They had but one object—*to penetrate* deep into the atom's core and thus *to satisfy* their curiosity.

21. *To provide* arteries of travel to every part of the state the Highway Commission is preparing *to spend* more than 300,000,000 dollars.

Showing pupils how to use gerunds and infinitives in composition is an art that must be exercised with restraint and caution. If the art is employed blunderingly, it will induce artificial sentences. A teacher must, in large part, trust to

time and the natural growth of the knowledge that has been implanted. He will do well not to be over-zealous in stimulating pupils to emulate the literary uses of verbals, but to put the daily emphasis on gaining knowledge. Real knowledge can be trusted to grow and bear fruit in style.

CHAPTER 12

THE CONSTRUCTIONS OF NOUNS AND PRONOUNS

A. The Purpose of Understanding Constructions

It would be almost true to say that the principal purpose of grammar is to teach what a simple sentence is. For a pupil who thoroughly understands the simple sentence can advance to a knowledge of complex and compound sentences by two easy transitions. Full understanding of simple sentences can be reached only by first learning to recognize each of the parts of speech that compose them. Chapters 5-11 have shown the progress from verbs, through the nouns and pronouns that are the subjects of verbs, to the adjectives and adverbs that modify the framework of a sentence, on to the prepositions that make modifying phrases, and then to the verbals that are modifiers or noun-like. (The conjunctions and interjections are not treated in Part Two, for reasons that are explained in Chapters 20 and 23.) This knowledge of the parts of speech will be sketchy and insecure until it is completed by analysis of sentences, by learning how all the dependent parts of the sentence are related to the framework.

The way in which a word is related to the other words of a sentence is called its "construction."

The most important construction of a noun or pronoun is to be the subject of a verb. The only construction of a verb that needs explaining is its agreement with its subject. Indeed the verb is so essential a part of a sentence that it is not customary to speak of it as having a construction. The constructions of adjectives and adverbs are explained by say-

ing what they modify, and the construction of a preposition by saying what its object is and what the phrase modifies. The constructions of all modifying words are, for the most part, plain and uniform; they are learned in the process of learning to recognize the words.

But nouns and pronouns have various constructions. A pupil must be familiar with the ways in which they act as parts of the framework before he can analyze sentences. All explanation of sentence-structure—whatever the form of diagram that pictures it—must throw into relief the two parts of every sentence:

{The Framework
{The Modifiers

When a class studies verbs, it should become used to seeing the verb and its subject as the principal part of every sentence, perhaps written on a line in large letters and labeled. Under the subject its modifiers may be written, under the verb its modifiers. Below is a diagram of the sentence "A few minutes later the angry Mrs. Raymond flounced out of the basement, followed by Bunny."

Subject	*Verb*
MRS. RAYMOND	FLOUNCED
the angry followed by Bunny	a few minutes later out of the basement

In the majority of sentences there is a third part of the framework that follows the verb—that is, either an object of the verb or a predicate nominative that explains the subject. The chief purpose of studying the constructions of nouns is to understand this third part of the framework. The four constructions that may be used here are described in section B, beginning on the next page.

B. The Constructions in the Predicate

1. Predicate nominative

A noun (or noun-like word or group of words) that describes the subject is called a "predicate nominative."

1. The third building on the left is the *post-office.*
2. This coin is the oldest *one* in the collection.
3. She has been a *mother* to me.
4. It was *she* who saved the day.
5. Ping-pong could hardly be called a *sport.*
6. Coolidge immediately became *president.*
7. His principal recreation was *collecting* butterflies.
8. Leroy's purpose was *to mystify* the officer.
9. He is supposed *to have been* the burglar's partner.
10. The plain fact is *that the judge was prejudiced.*

In sentences like 7, 8, and 9 a verbal that is a predicate nominative has a predicate or an object after it, and thus the framework stretches out to a fourth part; but such a complication should not be brought up in an elementary class. A sentence like number 10, in which the predicate nominative is a noun clause, is complex and should not be explained while a class is studying simple sentences.

Sentence 9 is a good example of the difficulties in which an inexperienced teacher may involve pupils, with no result except to dishearten them. The verb is *is supposed;* its subject is *he;* what can we say about *to have been?* This infinitive is, grammatically, a predicate nominative after the passive verb; it corresponds to *fellow* in "He is considered a crafty *fellow.*" But this is sheer analogy, or even make-believe; for we cannot form any mental picture of "to have been" as describing or explaining the subject. The teacher who does not foresee and avoid such scholastic figments will make grammar a torture-chamber. The teacher who makes fun of such curiosities reveals to the class a profound truth which some grammarians never grasp: Grammar is not a policeman who puts us into verbal jails, but a guide who tells us where the best roads are. In the wide ranges of the

English language there are many bogs and thickets where there is no thoroughfare; our business is not to flounder and hack about in these places, but to stay on the highway and make progress in the ordinary constructions. Nineteen out of twenty predicate nominatives are obvious noun-like words that explain the subjects of verbs. We are concerned with these, and not with the twentieth one that is freakish.

Adjectives are frequently predicate nominatives.

11. Some of the bottles are *dirty.*
12. Bread would be *tasteless* without salt.
13. Such an editorial would have been *absurd.*
14. This looks *more promising.*
15. The blanket felt *damp.*
16. The ice-cream tasted *salty.*
17. Pikes Peak now seemed very *near.*
18. The poet Cowper became *insane.*
19. Green bananas are considered *unwholesome.*
20. He was thought *to be* stingy.
21. Smoking was once considered *in bad taste.*

Sentence 20 contains an illustration of the contortions that infinitives will cause if they are allowed to tyrannize in a grammar class. The predicate nominative is, strictly, *to be,* which is followed by a predicate adjective. No such analysis should be undertaken in an elementary class; "to be stingy" may be called the predicate nominative without any analysis. Sentence 21 shows how a phrase of an adjective sort may be called a predicate nominative—if a teacher likes—without understanding any *to be.*

Predicate nominatives may come first in a sentence.

22. A *godsend* the canteeen certainly was.
23. *More curious* still is this next specimen.
24. *Who* is this fellow?
25. *What* is your reason?
26. How *glad* he will be to see you!

In questions or exclamations the subject is found by putting the words into the order of a statement: "Your *reason* is what. *He* will be how glad to see you." Then the subject

shows itself before the verb, and the predicate nominative after the verb. In sentences 22 and 23 the subject is obvious as soon as we ask, "What was? What is?" The canteen was a godsend; this next specimen is curious.

2. Direct object

It is the universal experience of high-school teachers that "object" is somehow fixed in pupils' minds as the response that is suitable for a question about any word beyond the verb. No matter whether that word is an adverb or an adjective or a predicate nominative or a predicate adjective, it is always assumed to be an "object." Presumably teachers in the lower grades have a good deal of exercise with short sentences in which there are direct objects of the verbs; pupils seem to be trained to suppose that every sentence is made up of a subject, a verb, and an object, in that order. Whatever the explanation, the fact of this "object" impulse in pupils' minds is everywhere met with. It is so instinctive that it springs to the lips of pupils before they can think; it is a violent obsession; it is almost ineradicable.

Hence the experienced teacher, who anticipates this "objectivitis" mania, carefully plans to familiarize a class with predicate nominatives before allowing any mention of objects. The class must be habituated to thinking of predicate nominatives, to reciting predicate nominatives, to expecting that a noun after a verb is describing the subject and is a predicate nominative. Only warily, and after long prophylaxis against "object," will the teacher allow any dealings with those nouns that follow transitive active verbs.

A predicate nominative describes the subject and means the same thing as the subject. A direct object is the word upon which the subject performs an action; it is something different from the subject. (The only exception is a reflexive pronoun: "hated *himself,* admired *themselves.*") Direct objects are a barren subject, having no influence in composition,

and are taught only for the sake of giving complete information about the make-up of sentences.

When a preposition that follows a verb fits closely into the meaning of the verb, pupils are prone to regard its object as the object of the verb. They will never be able to understand the framework of a sentence until they learn that sentences like the following do not contain any direct object of a verb:

27. She looked at it longingly.
28. The children were standing on the railing.
29. Mr. Knowles was preparing for trouble.

3. Indirect object

A noun or pronoun that shows—without any preposition—to or for whom an action is performed is called an "indirect object."

30. The splendid present gave *me* no pleasure.
31. We wished the old *gentleman* many happy returns.
32. The agent guaranteed *Lester* a hundred per cent profit.

The direct objects of the verbs are *pleasure, returns,* and *profit.* The italicized words are indirect objects. It is sheer fancy, a violation of the facts of our language, to say that there are understood prepositions after *gave, wished,* and *guaranteed.* The prepositions were never there; to supply them is to concoct pidgin English.

A knowledge of indirect objects is necessary for a full understanding of predicates, but is of no direct usefulness in composition. Teachers should beware of wasting time with this topic.

4. Objective predicate

This is a technicality that should be avoided in preliminary study, but it is so frequent an idiom, even in colloquial speech, that no pupil can have a sure knowledge of predicates until he understands it. An objective predicate is a

word that means the same thing as the object and that describes it by being a sort of second object. An objective predicate usually shows what the object is made to become, is called, etc.

33. They elected Morris temporary *chairman.*
34. We considered him an excellent *cook.*
35. Some people called the teachers *"professors."*

Adjectives and participles are frequently used as objective predicates.

36. His smile made me *angry.*
37. You should not have kept him *waiting.*
38. After that they left me quite *alone.*

Infinitives, without *to,* are common as a kind of objective predicate.

39. Did you see him *fall?*
40. You could have heard a pin *drop.*
41. What made him *accept* the offer?

Sentence 41 is a sort of museum-piece in grammar, for it contains no modifier except *the,* and the five items of the framework follow each other in order: subject, verb, object, objective predicate, object of the objective predicate.

All this knowledge of the components of sentences—and much more—must be in the teacher's mind, but he must not allow it to run away with him or to make him forgetful of useful purposes. He must dwell as little as possible on the facts of grammatical anatomy; he must not emphasize them as if they signified in themselves. Always one purpose should stand out large and clear beyond the minutiæ: to enable pupils to understand the structure of any sentence.

C. The Detached Constructions

There are three ways in which nouns and pronouns may be used as disconnected and ungoverned parts of a sentence: as nominatives of address, as nominatives of exclamation, and as nominative absolutes. A pupil must understand these

constructions before he can give a complete account of every simple sentence, but they are relatively unimportant matters. The nouns of address and exclamation are easy to understand and need only casual mention when the time comes. The absolutes are a difficult subject and are of doubtful utility in composition, but they are very common and must be taught at some time in any grammar course that is to give a class a mastery of syntax. See the full description of the construction on page 174.

D. The Most Important Constructions

Beyond the purpose of understanding simple sentences lies a second and much greater purpose: skill in composing an agreeable variety of simple sentences. An astonishingly large part of that skill is developed by way of two constructions: the subject of a compound verb, the appositive. These two constructions ramify throughout the whole of syntax; they seldom occur to untrained pupils; they are constantly employed by professional writers; they are precious when cultivated in school.

The usual textbook treatment of compound verbs is both comical and amazing to the teacher who knows their value in composition. They are casually mentioned as a syntactical fact along with the companion fact of compound subjects. A compound subject is two or more subjects that belong equally with one verb.

42. The *dandelions,* the *chickweed,* and the *plantain* grew in wild profusion.

43. The black *cloud* in the northwest and the gentle *breeze* from the south were signs of a fast-approaching storm.

Of course a sentence like number 43 may be a substitute for a childish compound form of this type: "There was a black cloud, and there was a gentle breeze, and these were signs." But the opportunities for sentence-improvement by way of compound subjects are infrequent.

The opportunities for profiting by compound verbs present

themselves in the writing of every theme, because the constant tendency of the uneducated mind is to make two successive statements about one subject, thus: "The red flames now burst through the roof, *and they* leaped twenty feet into the air." A theme-reader is perpetually harassed by tens of thousands of those needless second subjects—"and they, and then he, and so she, and it was." The pupil who has learned what a compound verb is can be taught *to omit the second subject.*

44. The red flames now *burst* through the roof *and leaped* twenty feet into the air.

The simple sentence made with the compound verb is not necessarily, in itself, a better form than the compound sentence; but the theme in which some compound verbs are used for variety is elevated into a different order of excellence. It is a blessed thing compared with a theme that is pervaded by the unremitting "and then another subject" habit.

No educational theorist could conceive how large a portion of all school effort to improve style must center in avoiding compound sentences. These are, to be sure, an agreeable form, common throughout literature. But authors contrive balanced sentences, vary them, and intersperse them among simple and complex sentences. Untrained pupils contrive nothing, do not vary, do not intersperse. They are slaves to "and another subject." The mental habit of perpetually following a statement by another similar statement hooked on with *and* is so deep and strong that no superficial remedies can prevail against it. It must be broken up before a pupil can gain the beginning of a sense of good style. It cannot be broken up by hopeful little adjurations to "subordinate your thoughts" or "vary the sentence-patterns." The compound-sentence habit can be put to rout only by a determined frontal attack. The prevalence of compound sentences must be made illegal. And this taboo cannot work a cure. We

must offer substitutes, one at a time, plainly described, made familiar by practice. One of the most efficacious substitutes is the compound verb.

A device which rivals this in importance is the appositive construction. An appositive is a substantive, often with a set of modifiers, that is set alongside another substantive to explain it and that has no construction in the sentence.

45. Lemuel Howard, a noted *man* in business circles, was one of the passengers.
46. I sent copies to a number of friends—*Reynolds, Stark, Mulford,* and several *others.*
47. He gave me a flattering letter of introduction, the best *gift* I ever received.
48. The only melon on his shelves, *one* imported from Spain, was beginning to spoil.
49. One of his tricks never failed to gain uproarious applause: *pulling* an egg from the boy's nose.
50. Every Congressman is animated by one desire—*to be re-elected.*
51. Bear in mind, moreover, the location of the coolest rooms—the south *side,* where the breeze strikes them.
52. Few people ever guess the true cause of this ignorance: *that the dreary Ph.D. researches destroy a love of literature.*

Many kinds of modifiers can give a touch of freshness and variety if they are sometimes placed in an appositive position—adjectives, participles, phrases, and some adjective clauses.

53. Miss Stoddard, *eager* as she was for fame, would not listen to such an offer.
54. A seat in the very front row, *where we should be within two feet of the musicians,* was not to our liking.

Look back through sentences 45-54 and imagine how any one of them would startle you if you came upon it in the average theme. Ungrammared pupils cannot use a noun, *man,* to explain another noun, *Lemuel Howard;* they are dependent on the compound sentence: "Lemuel Howard was a noted man in business circles, *and he* was one of the passengers." So of each of the other sentences. The pupil who

learns how to use an occasional appositive has added a refreshing grace to his style.

An ignorant teacher at work with grammar topics is like a savage who does not know that diamond jewelry is more valuable than glass marbles. All shining objects are alike to him. The teacher who can foresee composition values will disregard the grammatical trinkets and will select the precious pieces: the compound verbs and the appositives.

CHAPTER 13

UNDERSTANDING SIMPLE SENTENCES

Among all the vagaries of education it would be hard to find one more disconcerting than this: that pupils may study grammar for several years without learning what a sentence is. They may learn about the niceties of *shall* and *will,* the two classes of conjunctions, the interjections, the subjunctive mood, the ordinal and cardinal adjectives—about dozens of philological categories; but they may emerge from all the study without any conception of what a sentence is.

Perhaps they have memorized a definition like this: "A sentence is the expression of a complete thought in words." But what is a "thought"? The word *thought* is vague, unlimited; it can be defined only in such debatable terms of psychology or metaphysics as "a concept, a notion, cognition," and the like; it is not definable in terms of grammatical form. There is no agreement among philosophers as to what a thought is—much less as to what a complete thought is. How the definition, "expression of a complete thought," has persisted without warrant from either philosophers or lexicographers is a remarkable mystery.

Test it by applying it to the following group of words:

To be poor, horribly poor, and to have someone in the family with a great gift, a gift you believe in; to slave and struggle and fight for that person's training and education, as we did in our family.

Those words convey a complete thought, thoroughly elaborated; whereas these words express only an undefined thought:

We did so.

Yet the long series of infinitives is not a sentence; the bare three words are a sentence. Hence it is clear that any proper

definition of a sentence must be, as the dictionaries all agree, in terms of *grammatical* completeness.

A sentence is an orderly arrangement of words that is grammatically complete.

A group of words is grammatically complete when it forms a statement or a question or a command that can stand alone and be independent of other groups. All the preparatory study of the grammar of composition should be directed at an understanding of what an independent sentence is. For there are several kinds of independent sentences, which are formed in very different ways. Moreover, the ways of forming them are arbitrary matters of custom which cannot be described in any brief definition that would be useful in school or that would give information to a person who did not already have it. There is no short cut to an understanding of "independent sentence." We can reach the knowledge of what those two words mean only by becoming acquainted with one type of sentence after another, until we are familiar with all of them.

The first type with which a class should become familiar is, of course, the simple sentence, which may be defined as follows:

A simple sentence is a group of words that is grammatically complete and that contains only one subject and one verb.

We can see how this definition may be gradually amplified and made clear if we suppose, for the sake of definiteness, that we are observing the work of an experienced teacher in an eighth-year class. From the beginning of the year, when the study of verbs is begun, the teacher constantly emphasizes the fact that a verb makes a statement. (There is no need of more than occasional reference to the sentences that are questions or commands, for these are relatively infrequent and can be supplied later.) A convenient and

informing class slogan is "When you use a verb, you make a sentence." Nearly all the exercise material should be limited to simple sentences in which there is only one verb. The aim is to establish the fundamental understanding of how each verb forms a separate sentence that should begin with a capital and end with a period. "One verb, one sentence" is reiterated day after day.

This is only a half truth. It would be a calamitous untruth if the teacher were unaware of the exceptions. It would be a misleading half truth if pupils were taught that it was complete. But the class is warned every now and then that "One verb, one sentence" is not the whole truth, that it applies only now, while we are in the first stage of knowledge. It is the great guiding truth for the present. When we have learned it thoroughly, we can easily add to it the exceptions that are needed in the next stage of knowledge.

There are only three exceptions. If these are fully understood by the teacher, he will know how to avoid giving any misinformation by the slogan "One verb makes one sentence." The three exceptions that the teacher must have in mind are explained below.

1. The compound verb. There may be two or more verbs for one subject. Early in the year the compound verb should be taught (at least in a preliminary way), and thereafter it is to be understood that "one verb" includes compound verbs. One compound verb forms a simple sentence.

2. The verb in a subordinate clause. If any large proportion of a class were insistent logicians, the verbs in subordinate clauses would cause endless trouble for the eighth-year class. They are real verbs; they may have independent subjects, as in "which we all respected"; yet they do not form independent sentences; they are thus a contradiction of the daily slogan. Pupils, however, are not logicians. They will experience no trouble whatever from the verbs in subordinate clauses if the teacher forewarns them. He might at times

give them a glimpse of the two ways in which we can tell that a verb is not making an independent sentence: (a) when it is in a group with a relative pronoun, (b) when the group begins with a conjunction like *if, because, when, that, whether,* etc. The teacher will be prepared for such oddities as noun clauses that do not begin with conjunctions ("Floyd said *the car was ready*"), but will not display them unless class discussion calls for an explanation.

3. The verb in one of the independent clauses of a compound sentence. It is common custom in grammars to say that "a compound sentence is composed of two or more sentences." This double meaning of the word *sentence* (for the whole and for the part) might be confusing, but pupils will not find it so unless the teacher introduces the confusion. It is the fact—whatever words we use to describe it—that two sentences may be united by a coordinating conjunction to form one compound sentence. When they are thus united, they are called independent clauses. Hence a stickler for definitions might argue that the verb in one of the independent clauses does not form an independent sentence. This is sheer empty debating, for the opposite argument is more sensible. A teacher need never be hampered by the quibble, but he should be prepared for it if it arises.

The teacher whose own knowledge is scanty may tremble at exceptions, at the logical incompleteness of "One verb, one sentence." But the well-grounded teacher, who knows the far deeper logic of how pupils' minds work, laughs at objections that might be raised by false logic. He has nothing to defend or excuse. For he has distinctly announced that the formula which he uses temporarily is not entirely true, and he knows that it conforms to the most fundamental truth in pedagogy: Pupils progress more easily and rapidly if guided at first by the fact that *in the exercise material which we are now using* each verb makes one sentence.

If a teacher wishes to be closer to the whole scholarly

truth, and is not afraid of a complication, he may use another formula: Every verb forms a sentence or a clause. He will thus be preparing for complex and compound sentences. He will be guiding the class to realize that a verb is a sign of an important group of words. Whatever the formula, a pupil must be taught to regard every verb as of prime significance if he is to learn what a simple sentence is.

Knowledge of the simple sentence is a wide field where an endless variety of entertainment is to be found. At each step of advance in the knowledge of words there are chances to exhibit models that can be utilized in composition. For example, suppose that a pupil knew nothing of syntax except subject, verb, and object. His attention could be called to such a sentence as the following, written on the board:

1. He could see unfinished *timbers,* an open *hearth,* a rough-hewn *table,* and hand-made *chairs.*

Such a series of objects is easy enough to write; it would be a welcome variation from the customary compound form: "He could see unfinished timbers, and there was an open hearth." Here is a beginning of learning what a parallel construction is—a device that extends to the farthest reaches of rhetoric. We do not have to shift the construction by introducing another verb, but can continue the same construction in a series of objects of the one verb.

The untaught pupil seldom thinks of a series of two subjects after the verb.

2. There was a *smell* of horses and leather, and the dank *odors* of late evening.

Even this pair of nouns—so simple an arrangement, so easy to learn—might never occur to a non-literary mind that had gone through college without grammar. It would be afraid there was something wrong about leaving the noun *odors* stranded without a verb.

One suggestion in a lesson on adjectives might prove an opening to beauty for some child confined in compound sentences.

3. There was a giant bull in the herd, as *fat* and *round* as a prize Hereford at a show.

It is not necessary to say "and he was as fat and round"; the adjectives can be used appositively. The difference between those two uses of adjectives is the difference between a cellar and a hilltop. Most students never escape from the cellar until some teacher shows them the grammar way to freedom.

The imprisoned child goes round and round in the dark, grinding out two-verb sentences like this: "There were advertisements of the next play on the billboards, and it was also advertised on the programs." When he learns to use two phrases in a simple sentence, he can live in the light.

4. *On* the billboards and *in* the programs there were advertisements of the next play.

The pupil who can perform that simple trick is on the way to framing sentences like this, which would never be conceived by him if someone did not direct his attention to them:

5. *Like* a great locust, but *without* a locust's skill in landing, the plane ran along the yellow gravel.

Only a teacher who has read thousands of themes from high schools all over the country can imagine how rare a blessing such a form of sentence is in the composition of poorly taught candidates for admission to college.

There is only one verb in the next sentence; any intelligent pupil could learn to duplicate the sentence; yet only pupils with a literary knack ever do duplicate it until they are shown how a series of similar participles may modify a noun.

6. Marston did not laugh at the sight of a desperate man *hurling* himself to earth, *going* on his knees in the dust, *scraping* up handfuls of it.

In the next sentence the framework is "a man received a call"; a series of three phrases is between the subject and the verb; the verb is followed by two modifiers; *committee* is modified by a participle, which is modified by a phrase in which there is a gerund.

7. A man in close touch with workers' movements of all sorts received a telephone call not long ago from the chairman of a committee engaged in raising money for charity.

The writer of the sentence was not calculating all the modifiers and verbals as his pen raced along the paper; nor will a sensible teacher give pupils the idea that they should laboriously compile sentences according to any grammatical model. Every rational teacher will realize and constantly enforce the converse truth: If you become familiar with the structure of all sorts of simple sentences, you will fashion them naturally in your own writing, without laboring.

If, for example, a pupil is familiar with participles and adjectives as appositive modifiers, it would not be unlikely that such a sentence as number 8 would form itself almost unconsciously as he was writing a description.

8. They passed behind a mud hill about half a mile long, *walking* slowly, one behind the other, and entirely *unconscious* of danger.

If he is familiar with appositive adjectives and phrases, he would not have to contrive and count before he wrote a description like this:

9. An outside staircase *with* an iron railing ran *up* the garden wall *to* a big conning tower, open *on* all sides *to* the wide valley.

If he is familiar with phrases and compound verbs, his mind might almost unconsciously shape a simple sentence that it would never have dreamed of without some knowledge of grammar—for example:

10. The new road *climbs* the range at an easy grade into the dark pines of the summit and *descends* by wide curves into the sunny valley on the other side.

A compound verb and a participle can be put into a simple sentence, without any struggling, by a pupil who is acquainted with those constructions.

11. Steve *rode* out of Aklin, *covered* half the distance, and *stayed* over night, *intending* to reach home before noon of the next day.

Appositives are seldom utilized by a pupil who does not know what they are; when he learns about them and about several objects of one preposition, he is able to describe a man thus:

12. I struck up a friendship with the chief officer, Mr. Butler, a big man with shiny black *hair* parted in the middle, a clipped *mustache,* twinkling brown *eyes,* and a formidable *jaw.*

A knowledge of verbals will produce simple sentences that could never have been conceived without the knowledge.

13. He was ushered into a small room *lighted* by a lamp *standing* on the center of a wooden table.

14. The trees around the camp were festooned with strings of raw meat *dangling* from ropes *stretched* between branches.

15. *To protect* ourselves against unfair competition we organized a club, *called* "The Corinthians."

16. The Salt Desert is a vast plain *occupying* the central portion of Persia, *broken* here and there by ranges of barren mountains, *weathered* and *blackened* by the intense sun.

Pleasantly varied sentences will not spring up spontaneously as a result of a course in grammar. There is no magical "method" of producing such precious results by going through a certain prescribed routine in a classroom. The teaching of grammar will not improve sentences unless the teacher knows the art of continually showing pupils how alive grammar is, of inciting them to apply their grammar in living composition. But without the teaching of grammar there is no material for the pupil to work with. Without the definite knowledge of sentence-structure he is unsure and dim-sighted. If he has the knowledge, he is equipped to master the making of mature and agreeable sentences.

CHAPTER 14

UNDERSTANDING COMPLEX AND COMPOUND SENTENCES

A. Subordinate Clauses

The understanding of complex sentences is based on a knowledge of what a subordinate clause is.

A subordinate clause is a group of words, containing a verb and its subject, that is used like a single word in a sentence.

Subordinate clauses are fully described in Part Three of this book. This chapter presents only a preliminary account that covers what could ordinarily be attained by an eighth-year class.

A subordinate clause may be used as a noun, as an adjective, or as an adverb.

1. Noun clauses. The most usual kind of noun clause begins with *that* and is used as a subject or an object of a verb.

1. *That we should not talk through our noses* was his constant plea.
2. We believe *that you will be satisfied.*

A noun clause used as a subject frequently comes after the verb and is introduced by an *it* that is placed before the verb.

3. It is now clear *that he does not mean to help us.*

What is clear? "That he does not mean to help us" is clear. The *it* is not a real subject, but only a grammatical device for shifting the true subject to a position after the verb.

Indirect questions are regularly noun clauses. In the next three sentences there are noun clauses that have been formed from the questions "Will you go?" "Is it true?" "Why didn't she read it?"

4. Vernon asked *if I would go.*
5. They wondered *whether it was true.*
6. I couldn't understand *why she didn't read it.*

Words that join subordinate clauses—like *that, if, whether, why*—are called "subordinating conjunctions."

The conjunction is often omitted from a noun clause used as an object.

7. Miss Nelson thought ( ) *we had better turn at once.*

Questions formed with the interrogative pronouns *who, which,* and *what* may be converted into noun clauses.

8. The chief inquired *what our errand was.*
9. Can you tell me *who he is?*

2. Adjective clauses. Most adjective clauses are formed with the relative pronouns *who, which,* and *that.* These are attached to nouns or pronouns which they modify and which are called the "antecedents" of the relative pronouns.

10. There are some men *who have no interest in fishing.*
11. This oak tree is one *which my great-grandfather planted.*
12. The clips *that you are using* were made in Oakville.

An important part of the teaching of relative clauses is to make clear that every relative pronoun has a construction within its own clause. Neither the pronoun nor its clause is in apposition with the antecedent (as pupils are prone to think). The pronoun *that* is not a mere joining word like the conjunction *that.*

(a) Here is an idea *that I cannot understand.*
(b) He had an idea *that you disliked him.*

In (a) the *that* is the object of *can understand;* in (b) the *that* has no construction, but is a mere joining word. The

constructions of relative pronouns should not receive much attention in a beginning class, but there will be chances to give useful anticipatory hints about them.

Some adjective clauses are formed with such conjunctions as *when, since, after.*

13. The time *when* I feel loneliest is during the long winter evenings.
14. The room *where* he had his studio is now the nursery.

3. Adverb clauses. The great majority of adverb clauses modify verbs and are joined to the verbs by such conjunctions as *when, where, since, while, before, as if, unless, until,* etc.

15. Step up confidently *when your name is called.*
16. It now looked *as if the rain was going to stop.*

Adverb clauses that come first in the sentence and modify the following verb are the most directly useful kind for composition.

17. *Before you go any further,* listen to a bit of advice.
18. *Unless these caterpillars are removed,* the bush will be destroyed.

Some adverb clauses modify an adverb or an adjective by showing comparison.

19. The bowl was larger *than we needed.*
20. The chairman spoke more severely *than he should have spoken.*

Adverb clauses beginning with *that* and *as* may modify the words *so, as,* and *such* by showing to what extent, to what degree.

21. Joyce was so cautious *that he lost the best chance.*
22. The river was now as high *as I had ever seen it.*
23. The order was such a huge one *that we were suspicious of it.*

The clause that modifies *so* is of special interest because it is often a good substitute for the childish "so" sentences

that infest school composition. The child instinctively says, "He was wildly excited, so he didn't notice where he was stepping." The idea could be expressed with an adverb clause.

24. Joe was so wildly excited that he didn't notice where he was stepping.

B. Complex Sentences

When a pupil has made some acquaintance with the three kinds of subordinate clauses, he is prepared to understand what a complex sentence is. *Complex* means literally "woven together." When a simple sentence is turned into a subordinate clause and is woven into another simple sentence, it forms a complex sentence.

First simple sentence: Lafe Morton leaned from his saddle and removed the poles.
Second simple sentence: These poles formed a gate between the stone walls.

The second sentence may be converted into an adjective clause, "that formed a gate between the stone walls," and may be woven into the first sentence by tying it to the noun *poles.*

25. Lafe Morton leaned from his saddle and removed the poles *that formed a gate between the stone walls.*

Thus a complex sentence is formed.

A simple sentence may be turned into an adverbial modifier and woven into another simple sentence by attaching it to a verb.

First: Listen carefully.
Second: You can hear the water dripping.
26. *If you listen carefully,* you can hear the water dripping.

The *if* clause modifies *can hear.*

A simple sentence may become a noun-like group of words and be woven into another simple sentence.

First: Have you seen the account of the fire?
Second: Rebecca asked me.
27. Rebecca asked me *if I had seen the account of the fire.*

A subordinate clause always belongs with some one word, either as a modifier or in some noun-like construction. In sentence 25 the clause modifies the noun *poles;* in sentence 26 the clause modifies the verb *can hear;* in sentence 27 the clause is the object of the verb *asked.* Pupils are misinformed and set astray unless they are taught from the beginning to find *the one word* to which a subordinate clause is attached.

A subordinate clause may be attached to a word in another subordinate clause.

28. We now discovered that the pretty cases *which he offered at such a low price* were "seconds."

There is a noun clause which is the object of *discovered;* within this clause the noun *cases* is modified by the *which* clause. There might be a clause within this *which* clause.

29. We now discovered that the pretty cases which he offered at a price *that seemed amazingly low* were "seconds."

There is no limit to the number of subordinate clauses that an author may choose to weave together into one complex sentence.

30. The engineer explained (1) that airships navigate on wide currents, (2) which follow circular paths, and (3) that good judgment on the part of a pilot, plus constant radio information as to (4) what weather conditions he may expect, will enable him to choose a course on that side of the circle (5) where the wind is traveling in the direction (6) that he wishes to take.

There are six subordinate clauses: two noun clauses beginning with *that* which are the objects of *explained,* a *which* clause that modifies *currents,* a *what* clause which is the object of *to,* a *where* clause which modifies *side,* a *that* clause which modifies *direction.* But there is only one independent statement: "The engineer explained." Beyond that

subject and verb every word is part of some subordinate clause.

In every complex sentence there is one, and only one, independent statement. That is the prime fact that must be established and often reiterated if a class is to be well taught. This independent part is called "the main clause."

A complex sentence is a sentence which contains one main clause and one or more subordinate clauses.

Two comments on the terms in the definition will be helpful in classroom practice. (1) "Main clause" is more effective in pupils' minds than "independent clause"—because it sounds less technical, because it is more distinctive, and because it suggests "the great big principal part." (2) "Dependent clause" is a neat and logical term to contrast with "independent clause," but the similarity of the sounds is a source of confusion. The great need for class work is distinctive terms that have different sounds. Hence pupils gain clean-cut conceptions more easily if a teacher accustoms them to

"Independent statement" for referring to simple sentences,
"Main clause" for referring to the independent clause of a complex sentence,
"Subordinate clause" for referring to dependent clauses.

C. Compound Sentences

A compound sentence is a sentence that consists of two or more simple or complex sentences joined together.

The sentences that are thus joined into one are called "coordinate clauses."

There are two types of compound sentence: (1) Those formed with conjunctions, (2) those formed with semicolons.

31. I always looked forward to his coming, *for* he had at his tongue's end an inexhaustible supply of exciting stories, *and* sometimes he would give us deer antlers or alligator teeth.

32. The moccasin is one of the most truculent of snakes; often he will make no move to retreat when a man approaches.

Sometimes a semicolon is used with a conjunction to mark a greater degree of separation in meaning. This use of a semicolon is specially useful in a sentence of three coordinate clauses, to show a balance between the one clause on one side of the semicolon and the two clauses on the other side.

33. The water lily has green sepals, white petals, and yellow stamens; *but* upon closer inspection we note that they pass gradually into one another, *and* we are puzzled to say just where one part of the flower begins and the other ends.

This use of a semicolon with a conjunction is a refinement that has no place in an elementary course; it is an artistic possibility, not a grammatical difference.

What signifies in a grammar class is to learn that there are two ways of forming a compound sentence:

{with a conjunction
{with a semicolon

Usually there ought to be a comma before the conjunction, and there may be a semicolon if an author likes it; but the punctuation with a conjunction is a minor matter. What a class must realize as all-important is that *either a conjunction or a semicolon* must be used between two coordinate clauses. If neither conjunction nor semicolon is there, or if nothing is there, the result is the "comma blunder" that schools must consider the most serious mistake in composition.

Note well that *schools* must so consider it. Authors take liberties, which are explained on page 342. Pupils may take liberties after they have gained the privilege of doing so. The school is not hampering the pupil and is not asserting that authors are wrong. The school is only insisting that pupils must learn the difference between one sentence and two sentences, and must show the knowledge by always

using either a conjunction or a semicolon between coordinate clauses. This is what most authors do most of the time; it is the norm that educated people must understand. If a writer consciously violates this norm for a purpose, no fault is found with him; for the context shows that he is not ignorant. But if a pupil *ignorantly* violates the convention, he shows that he has not learned the lowest rudiment of composition.

The difference between a proper compound sentence and a pair of unyoked sentences is the difference between knowledge and ignorance. This is the reason why the teaching of the form of compound sentences is of such great moment in grammar.

Another reason is of a very different sort: Since our purpose is to reduce the number of compound sentences in themes, we must see to it that pupils understand what a compound sentence is. There is nothing wrong with compound sentences; they are prominent throughout all literature. But an over-use of them or a reliance on them is the mark of childish incapacity. Pupils must learn to be aware of the compound forms, to use only a decent proportion of them. Pupils will not be aware until they have analyzed compound forms.

Analysis of a compound sentence is simply a display of the two or more coordinate clauses that compose it, and then an analysis of each of these simple or complex sentences. It is a common custom of grammarians to say that if any coordinate clause is complex the whole sentence is "compound-complex," but nothing is gained by this ponderous bit of nomenclature. In fact, something may be lost. For pupils are best taught when they gain the one simple conception that a compound sentence is an aggregate of simple or complex sentences; a "compound-complex" sentence is not a separate type—any more than a "compound-simple" or a "compound-simple-complex" would be.

There is no limit to the number of coordinate clauses that a compound sentence may contain. Compound sentences of more than four clauses are seldom written nowadays, for they are felt to be formless and unwieldy. The high-school pupil who tries to put three coordinate clauses together is engaged in a risky undertaking, for he can win very little and will probably lose a good deal. In general he had better not go beyond two clauses, the second of which may be linked by *and* or *or,* may show a contrast with *but* or *yet,* or may express a reason with *for.*

When a pupil has thoroughly mastered the elementary knowledge of the three kinds of sentences, and when he has caught the idea of using his knowledge to make his style agreeable, he has been elevated to a new level. The amount of grammar needed is not great; it is only rudimentary as viewed from the standpoint of scholarship. But the imparting of even so much knowledge is an art that can be exercised with skill only by teachers whose understanding reaches far beyond the outline that is presented in Part Two. The equipment necessary for successful teaching is provided in Part Three.

PART THREE

THE CONSTRUCTIONS OF WORDS

CHAPTER 15

SYNTAX IS A SCHEME OF CLASSIFICATION

A. Syntax Is Not Logic

In 1932 the French Academy published a grammar which was designed to be an authoritative summary of the rules of French syntax. The book had been long awaited by the nation that takes such a lively interest in the correctness of its mother tongue and has such respect for its Academy. The book was eagerly bought by hundreds of thousands of people who were prejudiced in its favor. No sooner had the critics examined it than they raised a chorus of complaint and ridicule. Dozens of journalists and philologists published their proofs that the grammar was a compound of ignorant pedantry in which no account had been taken of the facts of modern usage.

One of the best qualified of the critics was Ferdinand Brunot, dean of the academy of Inscriptions and Belles-Lettres, who wrote a book to expose the errors of the grammar. His chief objection was that it was based on logic. He phrased his criticism of the book in words that every student of the grammar of any language must take to heart if he hopes to have his mind work sensibly about syntax:

> The greater part of the errors of the Grammar of the Academy has been the result of a false method. They used the method of logic instead of the historical method. In language logic explains nothing, or almost nothing, because a language is never a construction of reason, but a living growth. To reduce it to logical constructions you are compelled to falsify facts.

"Logic explains almost nothing." If that deep truth is novel to any teacher of English, he should never rest until he has made it clear to himself. In every corner of the

United States there are teachers who have no conception of it—teachers who carelessly assume, for example, that "it is me," "who do you mean," "you was," "between you and I," or "couldn't hardly," are wrong because they violate the logic of certain laws of grammar that were framed on some Olympus by superhuman authority. But "language is never a construction of reason." An appeal to logic in support of any idiom is a clear falsification of the facts of language. It is like arguing that a bee is "wrong" because her muscles are on the inside of her skeleton instead of on the outside where they "ought" to be. Nature made some creatures with outside skeletons; and since they evolved naturally, they cannot be wrong by human reason. So language has grown up through the ages, not by an exercise of logic, but by a quite illogical series of adjustments that were economical or convenient. The criterion of correctness of any idiom has always been: Do educated people use it seriously in dignified speech? The criterion has never been reason, but always custom. If an idiom is in good use, it is correct, no matter how flatly it is in opposition to logic. If an idiom is disliked by most people of good taste, no force of logic can make it correct.

Logic would require us to say, "A dozen of them *is* ripe," because the subject of the verb is the singular noun *dozen*. But the logic results in a vulgarism. Since the custom of educated people is to say "a dozen are," we must be illogical if we are to be right. Logic would justify "you was"—the use of the singular verb to address one person. This logic so nearly triumphed during the 18th century that Noah Webster put it into the paradigm in the first edition of his *Grammatical Institute* (1785):

I was
thou wast or you was
he was.

But by some unaccountable freak of linguistic preference the taste of educated people deserted the logical "you was"

and adopted "you were." At present the taste of educated people is divided between "whom do you mean?" and "who do you mean?" Several eminent grammarians are now assuring us that the illogical *who* may triumph over the rational *whom*. No one yet knows which idiom will be preferred in good usage, but we may be sure that usage, not logic, will decide the question.

Nor can logic be relied on to decide what are the best ways of explaining syntax to pupils. An illustration of how misleading logic may be in school practice is the elaborate argument made by a Dutch grammarian, Kruisinga, about the word *that*. He reasoned that the word cannot be a relative pronoun because it is never the object of a preposition which comes before it—that is, he started with the assumed definition: "A relative pronoun is a word which can be the object of a preposition that comes before it." Imagine the predicament of an American teacher who accepted the perfectly good bit of logic and then tried to explain to a class the sentence: "This is not the one that I wanted." Here would be a conjunction *that,* used as the object of a verb—a construction so at variance with all the rest of the scheme of English syntax that the teacher could never extricate himself from the bog of logic until he had reconstructed his entire program of syntax.

Of course we must make our teaching program as logical as possible, but our primary purpose is not teaching pupils to reason how syntax ought to be, but teaching them to observe how syntax, as a matter of fact, is. Our true purpose is *to exhibit the facts in the simplest and most consistent way.* We ought, for example, to be quite ready any day to abandon our lifelong notion that *that* is sometimes a relative pronoun, if by so doing we could see our way clear to making a simpler display of the facts; for there is nothing sacred about the logic of relative pronouns. But we should not accept Kruisinga's reasoning if we see that it will complicate our explanations in some other part of

the field. Logic could turn syntax topsy-turvy in a thousand ways. There is only one simplest way to group the facts. The purpose of every successful teacher is to come as near as he can to complete simplicity and uniformity.

B. Syntax Is Not Revealed by Substituting Words

Anyone who wishes to have a clear view of syntax should make sure that he distinguishes between two elements of language which often have nothing in common:

{The meaning conveyed by a group of words
{The grammatical structure of a group of words.

The distinction between these two elements can be seen by comparing the italicized groups of words in the two sentences below.

There was, *so it seemed,* a feud between them.
There was, *seemingly,* a feud between them.

Since *seemingly* has the same meaning as *so it seemed,* we might argue that "so it seemed" is an adverb. The argument is valid among philosophers, but is ruinous for pupils. A verb and its subject and a modifier, forming a complete independent sentence, do not become one adverb just because they convey an adverbial meaning.

The distinction between meaning and syntax is shown in the following three groups of words, which have the same meaning:

1. The athlete having the highest score
2. The athlete with the highest score
3. The athlete who has the highest score

In the first group the meaning of the modifier of *athlete* is expressed by a participle that has an object, in the second group by a preposition and its object, in the third group by a relative clause. Suppose that some grammarian who had a dislike to the customary explanation of prepositional phrases should argue thus: "*With* is equivalent to 'who

has'; therefore *with* is a kind of relative pronoun." Arguments quite as revolutionary as that have been advanced by reasoners who ask us to teach pupils about "infinitive clauses." They argue thus: The meaning of "I saw him fall" is "I saw that he was falling," in which *he* is the subject of *was falling;* therefore "him fall" is like a clause in which *him* is the subject of *fall.* The method of several of the most eminent modern grammarians is to exhibit infinitives and gerunds and participles as forming "clauses" because they express the meaning of clauses: these grammarians speak of "The subjects of infinitives, subjects of gerunds, subjects of participles." The teacher who is unfamiliar with verbless clauses should not reject the idea because it seems illogical. "Will it make easier the road to understanding the facts?" should be his first and only question. He must look ahead to detect where this kind of clause will lead him. It denies the definition of clause that is given in every grammar, but that fact need not be an obstacle. In an infinitive clause the subject is in the objective case, and that fact conflicts with the customary teaching of subjects to pupils who are prone to say, "Him and I saw it." But such logical inconsistencies might be surmounted. All that should concern us when we debate "infinitive clause" is to inquire whether the conception will aid pupils to progress more easily along one straight path through the tangle of verbals and subordinate clauses.

The meaning conveyed by a group of words can be the basis for one kind of logical system of grammar; it has seemed a wise basis to Jespersen and Poutsma. But it cannot be a method of explaining to pupils the difference between the syntax of "I saw him hesitate" and "I saw that he hesitated." A construction cannot be explained by the method of substituting a different construction that has the same meaning.

Every teacher is confronted by many questions of policy

in teaching constructions of words, questions which can be answered by arguments based on meanings—for example:

1. In "Over the fence is out" should the *over* phrase be called the subject of *is* or should we supply elliptical words that would also express the meaning?—"The player who knocks the ball over the fence is out."
2. Should we teach that *what* in "I like what you say" has an antecedent within itself because the meaning is equivalent to "that which"?
3. In explaining "walked five miles" should we teach that the preposition *for* is understood because the meaning could be expressed by "walked for five miles"?
4. In explaining "The evil lives after them" should we say that *evil* is an adjective because it has the meaning of "the evil work"?

In seeking an answer to any such questions as these we must realize that an argument based on altered syntax is just as cogent on one side as on the other. The mightiest grammarians are arrayed on opposite sides and give contradictory verdicts. By supplying words that convey equivalent meanings anything can be proved about any idiom. Hence there can never be any decision by debating meanings. One line of reasoning is just as correct as the opposite line. If a teacher assumes that one explanation is "right" and the opposite one is "wrong," his mind is closed to the only worth-while truth in classroom work—namely: All explanations of syntax are merely matters of policy, mere attempts to arrange the facts in the most simple and consistent scheme. The appeal to meanings is militarism, which dooms us to an endless warfare of opinion. The appeal to "policy for teaching purposes" gives the only hope of learning which answer is preferable. This is a hard saying and will exasperate logicians, but it is salvation for teachers who want to help pupils.

C. Syntax Is Not Prejudice

If a teacher has for ten years been accustomed to think of verbs as divided into two classes, transitive and intransitive, and in his eleventh year of work encounters the idea that no verb can be called intransitive except when it is used intransitively in a sentence, his mind is antagonized. He instinctively contends against the idea because he is—quite unconsciously—possessed by a prejudice that makes the new idea look monstrous. So accustomed is he to "a class of intransitive verbs" that he thinks this class has a real existence, that it is syntax. Of course it is nothing of the sort. It is a mere mental pigeon-hole. It is just a prejudice. The facts of language are entirely independent of his prejudice. He should be willing to consider whether the facts might not be stowed more conveniently in another pigeon-hole.

A very common example of prejudice in grammar is the notion that *his* is the possessive of the personal pronoun. The notion is quite logical, quite correct. But a different way of regarding the facts is to think of *his* as an adjective because it usually qualifies a noun. In French and German the words corresponding to *his* are inflected adjectives. Hence it is worth a teacher's while to consider the classifying of *his* as an adjective. One way of regarding the possessive pronoun is just as proper as another. Neither way of regarding these words is an untruth; neither way is wrong. The classification of *his* is not a reality of language, but only a mental device for sorting out a reality. The ideal teacher would never allow his mind to harbor any emotion for or against a way of classifying *his,* but would ask when a new classification is proposed, "Would it make the explanation easier for pupils?" This ideal teacher has never existed. We are all in bondage to our prejudices, are all inclined to assume that a prejudice represents some external

truth which is superior to facts. But we can all train ourselves to a considerable extent, and so escape from most of our superstitious prejudices.

D. Syntax Is Not Rebellion

When we examine Jespersen's simple scheme of syntax—principals, adjuncts, and subjuncts—we are charmed by it and are tempted to agitate for its adoption in American schools. Before we declare a rebellion against the older and more complicated scheme, we should consider the cost and balance it against the advantage we could gain. The power of the customary modes of thought about grammar is a mighty one. If almost all textbooks have for generations trained us to think that "nouns are modified by adjectives," only the rare person can wrench himself out of this way of thinking and give his mind a new shape. Before the whole customary system of grammar could be broken up, there would have to be decades of preliminary activity by revolutionists who could engineer the great work of overturning and contrive the new structure to take the place of the old one. *Grammar for Composition* is not engaged in destroying the old or advocating the new. Its business is to show the simplest scheme of syntax that will be useful in schools.

Even in the small details of grammar no novelties are proposed. No personal prejudices are included in Part Three unless they are also the prejudices of several of the most prominent scholars. A good example of conservatism that may seem radical to some teachers is the treatment of certain words like *however* and *still*. The classification of them as adverbs is not mere logical preference of one textmaker; it is warranted by an excellent body of authority and is adopted for the sake of guiding pupils to a knowledge of what sentence-errors are.

In short: the outline of syntax given in Part Three is not

based on logic or prejudice or the desire to destroy prejudice; it is an exposition of those ways of conceiving sentence-structure that have been found most useful in laying a foundation for good composition.

It is difficult to realize what is meant by "ways of conceiving sentence-structure." No one can imagine what the expression means until he is familiar with the vast extent and the infinite complications of English syntax as it appears when analyzed in a large grammar. In an ordinary text-book of advanced syntax the treatment of relative clauses may extend through seven small pages; this is scholarly and seems complete; the explanations look to the student like a scheme of the eternal truths about adjective clauses. But if he consulted Jespersen's four-volume grammar, he would find thirty times as much material and would discover that many of the statements in the meager "advanced" text were partial and disputable. It would then begin to occur to him that some other text-maker could get up an equally logical exposition that offered very different views of relative clauses. If he was observant and critical, he would ask himself: "What scheme of the syntax of relatives is best for school use, as a basis for composition?" If he turned the 187 pages of Poutsma's discussion of the articles, he would begin to see that English syntax has astronomical proportions. If he spent an hour with Mätzner's 306 pages about prepositions, he could begin to apprehend the difficulty of selecting just the particular little outline of the huge mass of facts that would prove most serviceable with a ninth-year class of an American high school.

A commonplace sentence that might bob up any day in a grammar exercise may contain an idiom which is not explained in one of the large grammars, which is explained at length in another large grammar, and which is explained by opposite reasoning in a third large grammar. Which way of regarding the idiom is best for composition pur-

poses? In the wide realm of philosophical scholarship one way may seem as valid as another; but in the small field where we cultivate sentence-sense one way may be destructive; the other way may be fertile. Only experience with classroom necessities can determine which of the conflicting logics is best to adopt. It is the purpose of Part Three to rescue teachers from conflicting logics by showing them the one simplest scheme of the facts of usage that is best adapted for teaching pupils how to improve their style.

E. Syntax Is Merely Classification

In Section C there are several references to "classification"; syntax is called "a mental device for sorting out a reality." The conception of classifying is so far from the experience of most teachers that its meaning may not be vivid. It must be vivid in the mind of anyone who apprehends what syntax really is. An illustration will help to show the nature of classification.

A zoologist never thinks that an animal "is" of one family or another. He knows that the whole system of assorting animals into orders and families and genera and species is just an arbitrary and artificial scheme of arranging the facts. He knows that animals might be assorted in several ways. They might be grouped according to where they live; in such a scheme of classification the whales and seals would be called fishes because they live in water. Or animals might be grouped according to the number of legs they have, or the kind of eggs they lay, or the kind of food they eat, or the kind of noises they make. One way of assorting them might be as logical as another; all depends on the convenience of the result. The method of classification by noises would be so indefinite that it would not be convenient; the method of classification by the kind of eggs laid is so unpromising that it has never been tried. A classification based on structure has proved the most convenient.

For example, all animals that have six legs can be classed as insects; all insects that have only two wings can be classed as flies. After the entomologists had spent two centuries in classifying the hundreds of thousands of species of insects, they produced a tolerably uniform scheme of this branch of living beings. But fleas have never fitted well in the scheme: they are like flies in having two wings, but are very unlike flies in other ways. Do entomologists quarrel about what a flea "is"? They do not. A flea is what it is. All the facts about its anatomy and mode of life are undisputed. It might be called a fly; it might with equal reason be called something else. Its classification is a sheerly artificial matter of convenience, which represents no independent truth. Naturalists have no interest in asserting that a flea "is" one thing or the other, but only in deciding where a flea will fit most neatly into the general scheme of classification of animals. Should a duckbill be classed as a mammal (with squirrels and elephants and whales), or should it be called a bird because it lays eggs? Zoologists do not argue about what a duckbill "is," but only about the convenience of putting it in one group or another. Zoologists do not debate about whether there "are" five groups of marsupials (according to the kind of food they eat) or two groups (according to the kind of teeth they have); for these classes do not exist in nature. They are mere mental creations for convenience in describing one kind of animal. No animal "is" of one kind or another, for the kinds are nothing but artificial groupings made by the human brain.

Zoologists do not argue that it is logically necessary to make five groups of marsupials; the only logic they apply is to ask, "Is an arrangement in five groups a more simple and consistent scheme of the facts?" Zoologists do not argue that "if an opossum had a different kind of teeth, it would then belong in another group." They do not say that a new grouping is "wrong" because it is opposed to an ancient

prejudice. They will not rebel against the established scheme of classification unless they are willing to pay the price of the great inconvenience that would be caused by altering the accustomed terms of the science.

Syntax is like zoology, an artificial scheme of classifying the stupendous array of the various ways in which words are used. The only logic that enters into it is the question of "What is most consistent and simple?" Nothing is "wrong" in the scheme unless it causes needless complications; nothing is "right" unless it increases simplicity. The established system must be respected—not because we reverence it, but because we find it convenient. Grammarians do not argue, for example, that a certain use of a pronoun "is" expletive, but that it is convenient to call it expletive just because the world has agreed on the classification. Syntax is not a scheme of the eternal truths of a language. Those truths are what they are, and no informed person disputes them. Syntax is a mere artificial classification for the convenience of students. It is not an assemblage of truths. It is only an arbitrary scheme, used as a convenience for displaying the facts.

The teacher who reverences the system of syntax as if it were in itself a truth is forever doomed to dark gropings. The teacher who sees the system as an artificial convenience, subject to change if more convenience can be gained, will live in the light and have an easy mind.

F. Definitions Are Not All-Inclusive

When the perfect scheme of classification has been devised, we shall be able to make for each part of speech a definition that will be all-inclusive. For example, we shall provide for modifying nouns like "typewriter table" in the definition of nouns or in the definition of adjectives. But at present our definitions do not include such a use of *typewriter.* We define a noun as a word that is a name, thus expressing

the usual and typical function of this part of speech; we give pupils a provisional statement of what is generally true, so that they may be guided through a preliminary study. We define an adjective as a word that modifies a noun or pronoun, and thus guide pupils through their first study of words like *useful* and *this* and *two*. After the ordinary functions of nouns are understood, we reveal a certain exceptional function—the converting of nouns into adjectives by applying them to other nouns. We come upon "at six years old" in literature and have to admit that this adjective *old* seems to be the object of a preposition—or else we have to admit that the dictionaries have failed to tell us about the noun *old*.

All definitions in grammar are provisional, are mere statements of what is typical and usual; they are not, they cannot be, all-inclusive containers of the full truth about the parts of speech. The teacher who realizes this fact is saved from embarrassment and hedging and misrepresenting. He informs a class at the outset that a definition is only a convenience, that exceptions and anomalies will crop out later. He treats such exceptions with an easy mind and invites a class to enjoy the joke. A definition is not an eternal truth. It is a preliminary and partial statement of what is characteristic.

The preliminary definition of a pronoun is "a word that stands in place of a noun"; later we admit without a blush that an impersonal form ("It is raining") does not stand for any conceivable noun. Gerunds are defined as noun-like verbals; later we see that they are sometimes modifiers, as in "a swimming pool." Adjectives and adverbs are modifying words, but we shall meet some that act like nouns: "none but the *brave,* till *then.*" A preposition is defined as a word that has an object; but the time comes when we encounter "retained" prepositions that have no object: "The place is much talked *about.*" We grow acquainted with phrases as modifying groups of words, for so they usually

are; but we are not abashed when we find that some phrases look like subjects and objects.

All grammars follow this policy of giving a preliminary definition that is not all-inclusive, and then explaining the exceptions. Teachers must follow that policy if they wish to economize time and effort. They will never feel confused or apologetic if they realize that a definition is not an all-inclusive logical compartment, but only a guide-line to what is generally true.

CHAPTER 16

THE MEANINGS EXPRESSED BY VERBS

For the forms of verbs (their conjugation) see Section 1 of Part Four. For the agreement of verbs with their subjects see Chapters 17 and 18. For complements of verbs (objects and predicates) see Chapters 17 and 18. For the combination of verbs with prepositions see Chapter 5, page 54, and Chapter 17, page 180. For verbs without subjects see pages 331 and 335.

Verbs may (1) make statements, ask questions, give commands, express emotion in an exclamatory way; they may (2) express statements and questions as matters of fact, or as matters of mere supposition; they may (3) represent that action passes from the subject to an object, or that it is confined to the subject. These three phases of the meanings of verbs are described in the three sections of this chapter.

A. The Four Forms of Sentences Made by Verbs

(a) The declarative sentence. The great majority of verbs make assertions in sentences that end with a period.

1. He *is* not here.
2. They *may* not *have been discovered.*
3. Such stationery *would have seemed* in bad taste.
4. You *might have done* better to stay at home.

(b) The interrogative sentence. Verbs may ask questions that end with a question mark.

5. How *is* he this morning?
6. Who *can conceive* such distances?
7. *Are* you better now?
8. *Did* you *notice* it?

Verbs have no forms to show that they are making questions. A question is indicated in one of two ways: (1) by an interrogative word (like *who* or *how*) at the beginning

of the sentence, (2) by beginning with the verb and putting the subject after the verb or between parts of it, as in sentences 7 and 8. Sometimes a declarative sentence is converted into a question by the tone of voice, thus:

9. So you are a burglar?

A common form of question is one that is a kind of repetition of a preceding statement, which is really proposed as a sort of inquiry; this is called an "echo" or "enclitic" question.

10. You haven't any money to lend, *have you?*
11. There's no use waiting, *is there?*

This question is of peculiar interest in composition because, though it is in form an independent sentence, it is properly written after a comma. A dash is a more consistent mark for such an abrupt shift in syntax, and pupils should be encouraged to use it.

12. He didn't have a scar on his left cheek—did he?

(c) The imperative sentence. A verb, usually without any expressed subject, may give a command that ends with a period. The unexpressed subject is said to be an understood *you.*

13. *Stop* this noise at once.
14. In the morning *go* quickly to work.
15. *Hark* you, sir!
16. You *put* that gun down at once.

Such a noun of address as *sir* often accompanies an imperative verb; it is not a subject, but a mere vocative that calls the attention of the person who is to receive the command.

(d) The exclamatory sentence. A statement or question or command may be spoken to express emotion; the emotion is expressed in writing with an exclamation mark.

17. You don't mean it!
18. What have you done!
19. Just think of such carelessness!

B. The Three Moods of Verbs

The term "mood" does not refer to the mental state of the subject of the verb, but to the form of expression given to the thought, to the mode of the thought. The preferable term is *mode;* but since *mood* has been almost universally adopted by grammarians, it is used in this book. It is possible to distinguish an indefinite number of moods, and some grammarians do describe optative, conditional, and potential moods. But these are so undefinable, or are so involved in the three principal moods, or are so dependent on an interpretation of the frame of mind of a writer, that they are inadvisable for school work. Indeed it is not proved that they accomplish anything for even the philosophical scholar.

Grammar can be very well taught in high schools without any reference to moods, except for a subjunctive contrary to fact. No teacher should have any dealings with the subject unless his experience has convinced him that he can benefit pupils by it. But he should, for his own information, know that in conventional grammar three moods of the English verb are distinguished: indicative, imperative, and subjunctive.

(a) Indicative. This is the mood of the usual statements of fact or of questions that ask about a fact. Probably ninety-five per cent of all English verbs are in the indicative mood.

(b) Imperative. A verb that gives a command is said to be in the imperative mood. See "The imperative sentence" in section A above. A verb that is imperative in its grammatical form need not convey any meaning of an order issued to someone who must obey.

20. Let me now explain these subscript numerals.
21. Think of the happiness you might cause.

Such imperative verbs are occasionally useful for varying the monotony of a series of declarative verbs.

Sometimes the subject of an imperative is not a second-person pronoun, but a third-person pronoun, or even a noun.

22. *One* of you hold his hands.
23. One *man* get the dinner ready.

Sentence 23 was spoken as a command by a sergeant and was imperative, but the verb could be called subjunctive.

Many verbs, imperative in form, really express a conditional meaning, and so could be called subjunctive.

24. *Give* him an inch, he'll take an ell.
25. *Love* me, *love* my dog.
26. *Laugh,* and the world laughs with you.
27. *Talk* about calamity!
28. He can't support her—*let* alone give her luxuries.
29. *Bar* this one item, the account is correct.
30. When you have read, *say,* fifty themes, walk around the room a minute.

(c) Subjunctive. The subjunctive mood is a form of the verb that expresses the meaning as merely conditional—as a possibility or wish or imagined condition. Note that the definition is in terms of "a form of the verb." A condition contrary to fact may be expressed by a form of the verb that is indistinguishable from the indicative.

31. If he had only been on time!
32. You should have spoken more politely.

The verbs in sentences 31 and 32 could be called subjunctive, and some grammars so class them. But if they are so classed, there is no limit to the subjunctive mood and no way of defining it except by the mental condition of a reader. For instance, sentence 32 may be thought of as a pure indicative, meaning "It was as a matter of fact your duty to speak more politely." Teachers who do not limit the term subjunctive to a special form of the verb which could not be indicative are unlikely to convey any knowledge to pupils.

The most obvious subjunctives are forms of *to be.*

33. If I *were* president.
34. My blood *be* on my own head.
35. *Be* it ever so humble, there's no place like home.

36. God *grant* that he may not be mistaken.
37. *Please* heaven, I shall be safe tonight.
38. *Go* not my horse the better, I must become a borrower of the night.
39. *Come* what come may.

If the verbs were indicative, they would end in *s,* to agree with their singular subjects. In the following sentences the lack of *s* shows unmistakably that the verbs are subjunctive.

40. We must insist that he *accompany* us.
41. It is requested that each member *subscribe* one dollar.
42. It is needful that a polo player *have* a private fortune.

In legal language the verbs in the *if* clauses are usually subjunctive, and the legal phraseology is often adopted in rule-books for games or by novelists to emphasize how conditional a meaning is.

43. If the declarer *lead* out of turn.
44. If any player *expose* a card.
45. If he *have* only pluck enough to go through with it.

Other examples of the stiffly formal subjunctive are shown in the next three sentences, where an indicative *will* or *should* would be more natural.

46. I sincerely hope that the reader *study* this.
47. I suggest only that the church *refuse.*
48. It is essential that he *become* familiar with our problems.

Most of the unquestionable subjunctives (except *be*) are singular. In sentence 49 there is a plural.

49. You should all give something, *be* your gifts ever so small.

The verb in sentence 50 might, if taken out of context, be thought indicative, a statement of fact about what the subjects are doing.

50. Angels and ministers of grace *defend* us.

But since the verb obviously expresses a prayer, and since it is similar to "God defend us," we feel sure that it is subjunctive.

The order of words and the meaning in the next two sentences lead us to call the verbs subjunctive.

51. *Had* you *told* me of your grief, I never should have answered so.
52. Oh, that we *might have been* there!

It would be natural to class as subjunctive such expressions of desire as the following:

53. *Would* that he might return to us.
54. *May* you *have* your heart's desire.

But beyond the limits suggested by sentences 23-54 only personal preference will go in search of the subjunctive mood. There is no definite knowledge to be found.

The principal use made of the subjunctive in schools is to explain why *were* is preferable to *was* in conditions that are distinctly contrary to fact: "If I were a man, if he were seven feet tall." Going further than this is advising pedantic formality that often defeats its purpose. Most *if* clauses do not indicate conditions that are contrary to fact, but conditions that are conceived as possible or real. A rather extreme example, but an excellent illustration of how authors use an indicative to make their conditions vivid, is seen in this sentence by H. G. Wells:

55. It would be impossible for the world to get along if the mass of its population *was* really specialized for gain.

Wells was arguing that the mass of the population was not specialized for gain; but he used *was* because he wanted the reader to feel his meaning thus: "even if this actually was true."

Devotees of the subjunctive should read the article in Fowler's *Modern English Usage,* two extracts from which are here quoted.

About the subjunctive, the important general facts are: (1) that it is moribund except in a few easily specified uses; . . . (4) that subjunctives met with today, outside the few truly living

uses, are either deliberate revivals by poets for legitimate enough archaic effect, or antiquated survivals as in pretentious journalism, infecting their context with dullness, or new arrivals possible only in an age to which the grammar of the subjunctive is not natural but artificial. . . .

The conclusion is that writers who deal in Survival subjunctives run the risks, first, of making their matter dull, secondly, of being tempted into blunders themselves, thirdly, of injuring the language by encouraging others more ignorant than they to blunder habitually, and lastly, of having the proper dignity of style at which they aim mistaken by captious readers for pretentiousness.

C. Transitive and Intransitive Uses of Verbs

A verb is said to be "transitive" when it represents action as passing to something that receives the action. The word *transitive* means literally "passing across." If the subject of the verb is the doer, the verb is called "transitive active."

56. I *wrote* a letter.
57. She *bought* some antiques.
58. The chemist then *tried* another experiment.

Whenever a verb has an object, it is transitive active; and, conversely, a transitive active verb always has an object. The term "active" is applied only to transitive verbs. It does not mean simply that the subject is acting, but that the subject is acting upon an object.

If the subject of a verb receives the action, the verb is called "transitive passive."

59. The letter *had been written* with a trembling hand.
60. Cotton *could* then *be bought* for six cents a pound.
61. Some further experiments *must be tried.*

If a verb is not transitive, it is called "intransitive."

62. Dr. Dorsey often *wrote* for six or seven hours at a stretch.
63. Mr. Cutten *was buying* with the expectation of selling in a few days.
64. She had *tried* hard but unsuccessfully.

If we hear that Mr. Cutten was buying, we must think that he bought something. Hence we may argue that an object is understood and that the verb is really transitive active. Some grammarians use a special name for such a verb: "absolute transitive." The name might be useful in schools if it could be limited in some specific, clean-cut way. But no such limitation is possible. When Shakespeare wrote, "I will buy with you," he was not thinking of any object, and did not mean the audience to think of any object. If a pupil is taught to supply an object, he will have a false conception of the meaning. What is worse, he will be started on a wrong track of syntax—namely, tampering with an author's meaning by supplying words that would be offensive to the author. The absolute transitive is a subtlety for which schools have no time, which is very unlikely to do good, which is more than likely to do harm.

There are two kinds of transitive uses which are sometimes distinguished in grammars because of the meanings of the objects. (1) When the subject acts upon itself ("He cut himself; they admire themselves"), the objects are said to be "reflexive" because the action is bent back upon the doer. (2) When the object is a mere repetition of the meaning of the verb ("He lived a noble life; they shall die the death of traitors"), the objects are not real receivers of the action, and the verbs are transitive only in form. Such objects are called "cognate." No teacher should introduce such distinctions of meanings in a class that is struggling to gain rudimentary knowledge. No grammar denies that *himself* is the object of *cut* or that *death* is an object of *die*. Hence it is quite useless to burden pupils with an analysis of the metaphysical nature of these objects. It is quite sufficient to call them objects and to say that these objects prove that the verbs are transitive active.

Another needless refinement is to distinguish the special class of intransitive uses which are called "copulative" or

"linking" because they join to a subject some substantive or adjective which describes the subject.

65. George I was the *elector* of Hanover.
66. The undertaking now appears *ridiculous.*
67. Caterpillars become *butterflies* or *moths.*

This copulative function of a few verbs is quite real, can be clearly defined, and leads to no harm. But it is a technicality that will kill time and cause confusion unless it is tactfully handled. Two illustrations will show the perplexities involved in treating copulative verbs: (1) If a pupil is taught that *become* is copulative, he may read the next day that "Red doesn't become her," and so be all tangled up with a copulative verb that is intransitive, but that takes an object, and therefore is transitive. (2) Many passive verbs are copulative.

68. Goldsmith *was considered* a poor talker.
69. Lamont *was named* chairman of the board.

So it appears that "copulative" is a function of both transitive and intransitive verbs; it cuts across the primary classification of the uses of verbs; it introduces bewilderment.

Teachers must, of course, be guided by their own experience and preferences. If they have learned to apply "copulative" advantageously in preparing for composition, they have warrant for teaching the distinction. But no teacher should spend time with it unless he has a definite purpose.

The distinction between transitive and intransitive has very little direct bearing on composition. Its usefulness is indirect—as part of the knowledge of syntax which is necessary to an understanding of that part of the framework of a sentence which usually comes after the verb.

The distinction cannot be approached by first studying the meaning of "transitive." No one, whether pupil or philosopher, can understand transitiveness until he has learned what predicate nouns and objects are. An object proves that a verb is active, and a predicate noun proves that a verb is

not active; but no study of the form of a verb, detached from its complement, will prove whether it is active or intransitive.

It is difficult to define an object of a verb, difficult to gain this concept that must be preliminary to understanding what a transitive verb is. See the discussion of objects on page 178.

The simplest approach to transitive and intransitive is in three steps:

1. Is there an object? If there is, the verb is transitive active.
2. Is the subject acted on? If so, the verb is transitive passive.
3. If a verb is neither active nor passive, it is not transitive—that is, it is intransitive.

Pupils should never be taught that there is a class of verbs which are always, by their very nature, intransitive. Of course, the forms of *to be* (*am, was, might be,* etc.) are always intransitive; *appear* is probably always intransitive; *seem* is always intransitive in modern use; and there are other verbs that we are unlikely ever to see in transitive uses. But they are few in number, and no grammarian can tell us which they are. The reason why a grammarian cannot discover intransitive verbs is this: If he should make up a list of verbs that the dictionaries and grammars call intransitive, and then should keep careful watch for those verbs in his reading during ten years, he would find that he would have to cross off one verb after another. For writers are always feeling the need of employing the so-called intransitive verbs in most unexpected transitive senses. We lead pupils astray if we tell them that there is a class of "intransitive verbs," for there are very few such things in the world. The truth which we ought to teach is that every verb, in any given sentence, is used either transitively or intransitively. The word intransitive ought not to be used for describing and classifying verbs, but for explaining the way a verb is used in a given sentence.

It is doubtful whether there is any verb that has always been transitive. If there is such a verb, no grammarian has told us what it is. Pupils are misguided if they are taught that there is a class of "transitive verbs." They should be taught that nearly all verbs may be transitive in one sentence and intransitive in the next.

Teachers who have been accustomed to thinking that transitive and intransitive apply to classes of verbs should read the following Discussion attentively.

Discussion of Transitive Verbs

The usual theory of transitive verbs is stated in the common definition: "A transitive verb is one that requires an object to complete its meaning." The definition implies, though it does not state, that verbs can be classified as transitive or intransitive. Most textbooks expound it less guardedly and less wisely than Whitney explained it in 1877 in his *Essentials of English Grammar:*

> Some verbs are usually, and almost necessarily, followed by an object. Thus *await, persuade, cross* seem by themselves incomplete, and we look for some word expressing the thing or person that is awaited or persuaded or crossed. . . . Other verbs, again, do not take, or are hardly able to take, any such object—for example: *rejoice, stand, walk, weep* . . . A verb of the former class is said to be a "transitive" verb, or to be used transitively; one of the latter class is called "intransitive."

Notice the cautious qualifying words that Whitney uses: "usually, almost, hardly." He does not say flatly that any verbs are, in and of themselves, transitive or intransitive; he speaks of their "being used" in one way or the other.

Later and less discerning text-makers have neglected to qualify their definitions. They speak of verbs that "cannot take an object, because their meaning is complete." They say that "some verbs may take an object"—as if such verbs were a small minority. Thus it has come about that a large proportion of teachers accept, as a basic axiom in explaining verbs, the notion that any given verb is, by some innate quality, either transitive or intransitive.

How this notion is contradicted by the facts may be seen in the *Century Dictionary,* which Whitney edited and which was published twelve years later than his grammar. In the dictionary he entered transitive uses of all four of his intransitive verbs. *Await, persuade,* and *cross* prove not to be transitive, but to be verbs that are sometimes used transitively and sometimes intransitively. *Rejoice, stand, walk,* and *weep* are not intransitive, but have both transitive and intransitive uses. That is the fact about nearly all verbs. They are not, in themselves, either transitive or intransitive, but may be used either way. The meanings of nearly all verbs are listed by dictionaries under two heads: I. Transitive uses, II. Intransitive uses. If a verb is more often or more distinctively used intransitively, its intransitive uses are put first, and vice-versa. The verb *rejoice,* which Whitney gave as an example of an intransitive verb in his grammar, is given in the dictionary as prevailingly transitive! This is illuminating evidence of what "transitive" verbs are.

The reader should remind himself at this point that Section C is not an argument about scholarship or logic. In a philosophical study of grammar one way of reasoning about verbs may be as proper as the opposite way; we are not concerned with those proprieties. Our business here is to be informed of the facts, to discover what scheme of the facts is likely to be most serviceable to pupils and most easy for teachers. One of the most important facts about verbs was stated by Whitney in his grammar; it should be graven in the mind of every teacher:

There is hardly a transitive verb in our language that may not also be used intransitively.

The inconsistency in that form of statement should be pondered by everyone who wishes to make his teaching as smooth and informing as possible—namely, "a transitive verb used intransitively." Are we helping pupils when we train them to follow such a contortion as "The verb is transitive, but it may be intransitive"? Won't the facts about verbs be much more clearly presented to children if we talk thus to them? "Any verb is called transitive when it is used transitively in a sentence. If a verb is not used transitively, it is said to be intransitive. These two words do not describe classes of verbs, but are names of two ways of using verbs."

Probably there are a few verbs which have never been used transitively by reputable authors; but the number is very small, and

no book of reference tells us what they are. It seems safe to affirm that *be* is always intransitive, and that when Shelley wrote, "Be thou me, impetuous one," he was erroneously using *me* for *I*. Yet a radical grammarian could dispute this; he could argue that Shelley really meant "perform upon me the act of converting thyself into me," and that he meant to use *be* transitively.

That possibility is not to be taken seriously, but it will not appear entirely fanciful to anyone who knows that Keats and many another author have used *lie* transitively—as in "the arms so idly *lain* amongst them."

What verbs are always intransitive? Perhaps it is safe to say that *appear* is one, for its meaning seems not to admit of an active use. It is hard to imagine how *miscarry* could be transitive, or *persist,* or *remain,* or *loom.* But the longer a person hunts for verbs that are always intransitive, the more he learns about the power of authors to achieve the unimaginable. Their skill prevails against all the powers of linguistic knowledge and ordinary usage.

The question of intransitive verbs is worth a thorough examination, for the teacher who assumes that verbs can be classified as transitive or intransitive is giving pupils a wrong notion of the language. The only easy and profitable way to study grammar is to consider that words have no grammatical status outside of sentences, that their syntax can be understood only by examining how they are used in sentences. If we approach sentences with the idea that verbs are preordained to be transitive or intransitive, we have ditched ourselves before we are on the road. We are putting ourselves into that nonsensical frame of mind which judges that an author is wrong "because he has used an intransitive verb transitively." We shall never regard syntax sensibly until we look at verbs other-end-to, inquiring how verbs are used in literature.

Suppose, as an illustration of a search for intransitive verbs, that one should jot down a list of two dozen verbs which might seem to have only intransitive uses:

amble	deviate	huddle	sit
arrive	die	linger	sleep
chat	fidget	listen	smile
come	frown	perish	stream
depart	glance	quiver	toil
despair	go	scoff	wait

When he looks the words up in a dictionary, he will find that twenty-one are entered as both transitive and intransitive. Eight of the transitive meanings are called obsolete, but these meanings occasionally occur in modern literature. For example, an anthropologist writes "Nothing can *deviate* their operation," and a storyteller writes "'Twould perish the crows." *Amble, die,* and *quiver* are entered as only intransitive; but all pupils are familiar with "die a violent death," and A. S. M. Hutchinson has used the other two transitively: "Ambling his bicycle along the pleasant lanes. The mare continued to quiver her beautiful nostrils at him."

Even *seem, become, rise,* and *tower* have transitive uses. There are common colloquial uses of *fall* as transitive—as in the Adirondack lumberman's "falling a tree." The transitive use of *wait* is called colloquial, and the transitive use of *experiment* is called obsolete; but the philosopher Hocking uses both in a scholarly modern book: "He who *waits* his assent till God is proved to him. The idealist has not yet *experimented* his freedom." Transitive uses of *emanate, lapse,* and *tingle* are called rare by the dictionaries, yet authors and business men slip them easily into unaffected writing: "The teacher who *emanates* force" (W. L. Phelps). "The policies will be *lapsed"* (advertisement of a life-insurance company). "The whiff of coffee *tingled* his busy nose" (Christopher Morley).

The following sentences illustrate how naturally editors and scientists and philosophers employ verbs transitively with the meaning of "cause to do something," though the *Century* gives no transitive meanings.

1. Some of which may *function* the native impulses.
2. The trust is authorized to receive gifts and to *accrue* and administer all property.
3. May the knowledge help to *subside* your pain at this terrible loss.
4. Final spurt *soars* stocks to new highs.
5. By building mountains, and by tearing them down; by *emerging* continents and by submerging them.
6. Mr. Stimson *culminated* a series of challenging notes to Japan.

An unwary teacher might assume that *make* is a transitive verb, but it has many intransitive uses. *Complete* is a typical example of a verb which is supposed to be always transitive; it is only an illus-

tration of the fact that every verb may, conceivably, be used intransitively:

7. When their growth has *completed,* the old feathers are removed.

Verbs ending in *fy* might seem forced to remain transitive by their very nature. But anyone can prove in a few minutes that many of them may be intransitive. Let him jot down the first two dozen that occur to him and then see what the dictionary says about them. He will have a list of a dozen or more for which the dictionary enters intransitive uses—like these: *calcify, certify, edify, justify, mollify, mortify, petrify, putrefy, signify, solidify, vilify, vivify.* After this experiment one is moved to suspect that any *fy* verb may have been used intransitively by some author.

A striking exhibit of the transitive possibilities of verbs is the following list that are said by the *Century* to have only intransitive uses; those marked with a *q* are verbs for which transitive uses can be quoted:

accrue *q*
amble *q*
appear
be
become (in the sense of grow to be)
coalesce
collapse *q*
decease
die (except for die a death)
disagree *q*
disappear *q*
elapse
emerge *q*
function *q*
happen *q*
lie *q*
miscarry
rebel *q*
seem (in sense of appear)
soar *q*
struggle
subside *q*
succumb
tremble *q*
vanish *q*

Complete and *transfer* are shown as always transitive in the *Century,* but there are quotations that show intransitive uses.

A teacher's mind must be adjusted to the indubitable fact that almost every verb may be used intransitively and that all but a very few verbs may be used transitively. It is dangerous to think of *appear* as "an intransitive verb"; the safe and true way to think is this: "Perhaps the verb *appear* has never been used transitively." We should not think of transitive and intransitive as words that describe classes of verbs, but as words that describe uses of verbs in sentences.

There is danger that the previous paragraph may be misunderstood. When a teacher reads that "we should not think" of

transitive verbs as a class, he is likely to suppose that the words refer to grammatical theory, that they challenge older grammars, that they announce a new dispensation. They do nothing of the sort. They are in accord with section D of Chapter 15, which is entitled "Syntax is not rebellion." This Discussion is not a revolt against the customary treatment of transitive verbs, but is only a display of the facts of the transitive and intransitive uses. It is an explanation for teachers of how those facts will distress anyone who is unaware of them, of how the facts can be whipped into line for classroom purposes by a teacher who knows what "transitive" means. This Discussion is an effort to make teaching more effective by interpreting the wisdom of these words of the *Century* Dictionary: "The distinction between transitive and intransitive [classes of verbs] is only of minor importance, since no transitive verb is in English incapable of intransitive use." The teacher who understands that statement can be more efficient.

Read—
Page 324 - Restrictive
396 - Possessive
390 - use of shall + will

CHAPTER 17

THE CONSTRUCTIONS OF NOUNS

In Latin grammar a "case" of a noun is a form that is used to show its relation to other words in a sentence—for example, *homo* is one case, *hominis* another, *hominem* another. English nouns used to have four such case-endings, and some pronouns still have three. Hence by studying the history of the language and by comparing the constructions of nouns with those of pronouns we are able to say that nouns have cases in modern English.

But these cases are like classical ghosts that haunt the language. If we say that a subject of a verb and a predicate noun after a verb and a noun used in address and a noun used absolutely with a participle are all in "the nominative case," what are we talking about? We are only summoning up several spirits of dead Latin or Old English forms and using their names for the activities of nouns in modern sentences.

Our real concern in school is not with the so-called "cases," but with the relations of nouns to other words in sentences. These relations are called the "constructions" of nouns. It is usual and convenient to group these constructions under three case-names: possessive, nominative, and objective.

A. The Possessive Case

English nouns have only one variation of form to show case—the possessive. This is made in one of two ways: (1) by adding an apostrophe and *s* (boy's, men's), by adding an apostrophe after *s* (boys', Marxes'). The customary formula for describing the construction of a possessive noun is to say "Possessive case, possessing ....." and then add the

noun that follows the possessive. (For a description of the forms and correct uses of possessives see page 396.)

A possessive noun could be called an adjective, since it qualifies a noun and, in a way, gives some description of it. To call a possessive noun an adjective is as logical as to call it a noun. The choice of what to call it is therefore a question of policy: which name will be more consistent in the simplest scheme of syntax that we can build? The reasons for calling a possessive a noun are strong: (1) it is felt as a noun (usually referring to a person), (2) it has no adjective ending, (3) it may be modified by adjectives ("the unlucky Mr. Burr's only chance"). The last reason seems conclusive. For if we had to explain that *Mr. Burr's* is an adjective, but is modified by an adjective, we should then have to devise some new definition of adjectives. If we say that the possessive is a noun, we are not mixed up in any contradictions.

For a discussion of possessives that seem to be subjects or predicates or objects see Ellipses, page 329. For possessives in apposition see section E of this chapter. The general treatment of possessive forms is in Part Four, page 396.

The only construction of a possessive that needs to be mentioned in this section is the double possessive, as in "a whim of my father's, a friend of her mother's, a poem of Blake's." These possessives which are the object of *of* are needless and illogical; hence some logical rhetoricians have wished to proscribe them. But they have been a standard literary idiom for many centuries. All we can do with them in a grammar class is to recognize their existence and admit the fact of their construction—that they are possessive nouns which are the objects of *of*. No reasonable ellipsis can be supplied; to say, for instance, that "a whim of my father's" means "a whim of (among) my father's whims" is to assert what was never in the mind of any speaker of English. (See the similar use of possessive pronouns, page 207.)

B. The Nominative Constructions of Nouns

Any kind of word or group of words may be used as a noun:

1. The *ups* and *downs* were nerve-racking.
2. The four *ons* in one sentence were absurd.
3. *A* is the first letter of the alphabet.
4. *For* is usually considered coordinating.
5. *"On your toes"* may not be an elegant expression.
6. *"Where are the nine?"* is found in the seventeenth chapter of Luke.

For classroom purposes it is usually best to avoid such oddities. If they come up in recitation, it is best to say that they are subjects and not to question what part of speech they are. If *ups* is the subject of a verb, it is, in the sentence, a kind of noun; so far as possible a teacher should avoid saying that it is "an adverb used as a noun." The converse way of thinking is the profitable one: "If a word is used as a noun, we call it a noun."

In section B there are no examples of these unusual subjects, for the purpose here is to describe the constructions of ordinary nouns. Some of these subjects are treated under prepositions, adverbs, etc. The noun-like verbals and clauses are treated under infinitives, gerunds, and noun clauses.

1. Finding the subjects of verbs. The subject of a verb is the word about which the verb makes a statement or asks a question or to which it gives a command. Such a formal definition is necessary for the grammarian, but it conveys no information to pupils and should not be relied on. Indeed it is safe to say that it had better not be used in classroom work. For the fact in the mental operation of scholars and pupils alike is that "making a statement about" is ambiguous. The philosophical grammarian Poutsma shows that the real or psychological subject of a verb may be very different from the grammatical subject. Consider this sentence: "The only cure for you is a rest." The verb might seem, to a pupil, to make a statement about *you* and a *rest,*

yet neither *you* nor *rest* is the subject. Even if it could be proved logically that *is* does not make a statement about *you* or *rest,* the fact remains that pupils cannot follow the logic. The teacher who tries to explain a subject of a verb as "that which is talked about" will waste time and nerves, will probably fail.

The only way to inform pupils about subjects in declarative sentences is to teach them to ask, "Who or what?" about the verb. The answer to the question is the subject. It is not a magical question; it will not instantly or always compel the right answer. But it is more successful than any other device yet proposed. When a pupil has had a little practice with it, he can see that "you is" does not answer the question, can look for another subject in front of *is,* and can probably find that "the cure is."

The "Who or what?" question is more useful for finding subjects that come after the verb—a position to which they are often pushed by the expletive *there* or by some modifier that comes first in the sentence.

7. There came a *burst* of applause.
8. There needs no *ghost* to tell us this. (*Ghost* looks like an object, and *need* usually takes an object; but here it is intransitive, and *ghost* is its subject.)
9. In a vale in the land of Moab there lies a lonely *grave.*
10. Now was their *chance.*

The subjects of interrogative sentences are found by turning the question into the form of a statement. "Was the train late?" becomes "The train was late." "Why were the elephants afraid?" becomes "The elephants were afraid why." In the form of a statement the subject appears in its normal position before the verb.

The subjects of commands are an understood you: "(You) Come here at once. (You) Be so kind as to explain."

For most school exercises in finding subjects no further explanation is needed. Through all the maze of subjects in

an inverted order and subjects that differ in number from their predicates the clue of "Who or what?" will serve better than any device that depends on detecting "what the verb is speaking about." Pupils should not be led into the maze, for it is not the business of the school to train them to be expert puzzle-solvers. In suitable exercise material they will seldom encounter difficulties. If they faithfully ask "Who or what?" about each verb that appears, they will almost always secure the subject without any perplexity whatever. If an occasional perplexity arises, the teacher should take it lightly, announce the right solution, and pass on.

But certain subjects are puzzling—those that differ in number from the predicate nominative. If a teacher does not thoroughly understand these peculiar combinations, he will now and then find himself embarrassed in recitation. He is doomed to perpetual uneasiness if he has become confused by the common dictum of grammarians that "it is often hard to tell the difference between a subject and predicate nominative." If he has trustfully accepted the statement as a truth, he should disabuse his mind by reading the Discussion at the end of this chapter, page 194.

2. Agreement of subject nouns with their verbs. A noun is in the singular number when it means one (box, plan, mouse); it is in the plural number when it means more than one (boxes, plans, mice). A verb is singular when its form refers to a singular subject (is, has, likes); it is plural when its form refers to a plural subject (are, have, like).

Ordinarily a singular verb belongs with a singular subject, and a plural verb with a plural subject—that is, a verb is said to "agree with its subject in number."

11. All the doors *were* open.
12. A pile of boxes *stands* on the sidewalk.
13. There *have been* several such reports lately.

When a plural like *boxes* comes between the subject and

the verb, it may be so prominent in the writer's mind that it will lead him to use a plural verb. The plural verb is considered erroneous, and quite properly so; but teachers do well to remember that this kind of error has not infrequently been perpetrated by authors and not detected by proof-readers: "The *site* of the fields *are* restricted by high ground."

Certain peculiarities in the agreement of verbs and subjects are explained below. The subjects of plural verbs are first, then the subjects of singular verbs.

3. The subjects of plural verbs. It sometimes happens that a noun which is singular in form has a plural meaning and that the verb should agree with the meaning instead of the form.

14. The *rest* of the men *were* quiet.
15. *A few* of them *are* ready now.
16. *A dozen* of the seeds *were* sprouting.
17. *A number* of us *have* volunteered.

A collective noun, though it is singular in form, often takes a plural verb because it refers to the individuals in the group.

18. The crowd *were* deeply affected, but they uttered no shouts.
19. The government *have* apologized to the British consul.
20. The cabinet *agree* with the court's reasons. (The plural verb with nouns like *government* and *cabinet* is more common in England than in America, as shown in the next sentence.)
21. It may well be doubted whether either *side* of the controversy *are* able to say what they mean. (*Side* is used for "the writers on either side.")
22. The committee *were* unable to agree.
23. The whole village *meet* together with their best faces. (Addison)
24. A large *group* of concessive clauses *are* introduced by adverbs. (Poutsma)
25. Both writers assume that there *are* a plurality of such propositions. (*Britannica* article on philosophy)
26. The class *are* not prepared for such a test.

A compound subject usually has a plural verb.

27. The *parrot* and the *cat were* staring at each other.
28. The *leaf* and the *blossom look* much alike.

4. The subjects of singular verbs. Certain peculiarities of the subjects of singular verbs are as follows: If two nouns express one idea, they may take a singular verb.

29. The tumult and the shouting *dies.*
30. Buying and selling *is* limited by the consumption needs.
31. Ham and eggs *was* not on the menu.

If each one of two or more singular subjects applies separately to the verb, the verb should be singular. A common agreement of this sort is a pair of subjects connected by *or.*

32. A speck of dust or a tiny shred of lint *is* heavy enough to sway the balance.

Note that if one of the subjects connected by *or* is plural, the verb may be plural.

33. The leader or the plugs *are* defective.

But if the singular noun is next to the verb ("the plugs or the leader are"), the sentence seems mistaken; few writers would defend it.

Pairs of singular subjects may be connected by *either* ..... *or, neither* ..... *nor.*

34. Either a pebble or a piece of metal *has* been jammed into the opening.
35. Neither this man nor his brother *has* sinned.

Authors are sometimes heedless of this rule. Whitehead, for example, wrote: "Neither Descartes nor James were the most characteristic philosophers of their epochs."

Note that if the subjects connected by *or* or *nor* differ in number, the verb may agree with the nearer one.

36. Either the cashier or the bookkeepers *have* made an error.
37. Neither these men nor their employer *is* to blame.

The plural verb in sentence 36 is usual and well accredited;

but such a singular verb as that in sentence 37 is felt to be clumsy and would be avoided by most writers.

If two or more subjects connected by *and* or *but* are meant to apply separately to the verb, the verb may be singular.

38. Each scratch and dent *was* woefully evident.
39. Not enjoyment and not sorrow *is* our destined end.
40. Not knowledge of rules, but acquaintance with cultured people, *produces* good speech.

It often happens that a plural noun is put between a singular subject and its verb in a kind of parenthetical way; the verb should remain singular.

41. The blood-stain, not the finger-prints, *has* furnished the clue.
42. Each Olympic team, with its trainers and cooks and rubbers, *forms* quite a colony.

A plural noun that indicates an amount or a length of time should have a singular verb.

43. A hundred dollars *seems* too high a price.
44. A thousand years *is* but as yesterday in Thy sight.

It is commonly agreed that such a plural as "seven times eight" or "one-half plus one-third" should have a plural verb; both logic and usage justify the rule. But logic and usage can also be cited for the singular verb.

45. Five times four *is* twenty.
46. Eight plus three *is* eleven.

5. Subject of the infinitive. It is commonly said in grammars that nouns may be used objectively as "subjects of an infinitive," as in "I saw the *porter wink* at the conductor. The captain ordered the *sergeant to clean* up the tent." This construction is discussed under Infinitives, page 284.

6. Predicate nominative. A large majority of grammars use "predicate" to mean the verb and its complement (that is, its object or predicate noun or adjective).

47. I *put iodine* in the cut.
48. Mr. Barlow *was a prominent citizen.*

"Put iodine" (the verb and its object) is called a predicate;

"was a prominent citizen" (the verb and its nominative complement) is called a predicate. There is no call to quarrel with this nomenclature.

But teachers will find that they simplify the vocabulary of grammar and sharpen the conceptions of it if they use "predicate" to mean predicate nominative—that is, the substantive or adjective that is joined to a subject by a verb and that describes the subject. There is good precedent for this meaning of predicate in the grammars of Whitney, Sweet, and Jespersen. In this section "predicate" will be used, for simplicity, to name those nouns that are usually called predicate nouns.

A useful form for defining a predicate to a class (though it is not scholarly or exact) is "It means the same thing as the subject and describes the subject." If a pupil is forearmed with this idea, he is in the way to understand the difference between a predicate and an object. Predicates are most commonly joined to subjects by forms of *to be:*

49. A "wammus" is a *sweater.*
50. The new law will be a *god-send* to tenants.
51. Stonehenge has always been a *puzzle* to archeologists.
52. Some of you might have been *guides* for the visitors.

A few other verbs frequently link predicates.

53. The retreat became a *rout.*
54. That seems a queer *way* to answer.
55. The origin of life must forever remain a *mystery.*
56. She turned all *colors.* (This is a peculiar idiom, a variant of "turned red," etc. See page 240.)

The following examples of predicates are unusual in modern prose and should not be proposed to pupils, but a teacher should be prepared to explain if questions are asked about them. In each sentence it is clear that the italicized noun means the same thing as the subject and explains the subject.

57. He fell a *victim* to the popular frenzy.
58. Helen had grown a beautiful young *woman* now.

59. His testimony appears a sheer *lie* to me.
60. We rest your *hermits* (from *Macbeth; rest* means remain).
61. He departed a wiser *man.*
62. Gehazi went out a *leper.*
63. He went overseas a *corporal;* he returned a *major.*

Predicates may be linked by passive verbs.

64. These larvæ are called *bookworms.*
65. His proposal was considered a generous *offer.*
66. Sidney was named *chairman.*
67. By this clever ruse the rebels were made firm *allies.*
68. Ilya was acclaimed the *queen* of the tribe.
69. General March was appointed *chief-of-staff.*

Predicates (as is shown on pages 105 and 196-197) may come before the verb.

70. A *man* he was to all the country dear.
71. A fine *detective* you are!

Some peculiar predicates are hard to analyze. Consider the following italicized words:

72. Is anything the *matter?*
73. The pole was just the right *height.*

We cannot say that *matter* really describes *anything;* we can only say that in form it appears to be a predicate, that we know of nothing else to call it. If anyone can discover a better explanation, we shall be glad to accept it. The word *height* looks just like a predicate after *was,* and it could be so called. But most pupils (and most teachers?) would prefer to understand an *of* which has *height* for its object. Perhaps *height* could be called adverbial, expressing the size of the pole. The judicious teacher will always be glad to welcome any answer that has some logic in it; he will not rule any answer wrong unless it is a thoughtless one; he will keep in mind that the most eminent grammarians dispute the logical solutions of other grammarians, and that therefore no solution can be called right or wrong if it is one that some grammarian might conceivably accept.

Predicates are commonly hooked to verbs by *as*.

74. This came as a *surprise* to me.
75. She was treated as a *servant*.
76. The string will serve as a *reminder* to you.

The *as* in such sentences might be called a preposition; it might be called a conjunction that joins an elliptical clause—"as a surprise might come," etc. The use of *as* is so anomalous that no explanation of it really explains anything. All we can do with it is to decide which pigeon-hole will take it most conveniently. Grammars are pretty well agreed in calling it an irregular kind of joining word that links all sorts of predicates and objects.

A predicate is frequently linked by *to be*.

77. The bell-boy seemed to be an *agent* for the laundry.
78. McIlvain is reputed to be a wealthy *man*.

The complete explanation of such predicates is that *to be* is a predicate after the verbs and takes the nouns as predicates after itself. Teachers who have to avoid as many details as possible need not go through this analysis. Perhaps no harm will be done by calling *seemed to be* the verb, for so it is in effect. But if *to* has been previously ruled out as part of the verb, the teacher must warn the class that speaking of *seemed to be* as a verb is a handy makeshift for this emergency only.

7. Nominative of address. A noun used for addressing a person or thing is independent of the syntax of the sentence. It is a mere signal to call attention, a sort of interjection. It is said to be in the nominative case.

79. I trust, *sir,* that the austerity of the chair will pardon me.
80. On second thought, *Miss Nelson,* I see that I must decline.
81. Twinkle, twinkle, little *star.*

A noun of address may be written with an exclamation mark, and so have the appearance of a noun of exclamation.

82. *Amanda!* What a thing to say!

8. Nominative of exclamation. A noun used as an interjection to show emotion is said to be in the nominative case.

83. *Heavens!* Is there no help?

84. Ye *gods!* it doth amaze me. (The gods are not addressed in this sentence; the noun *gods* is used as an exclamatory word.)

85. *Mercy* and *miracles!* What a start you gave me!

Many detached exclamatory nouns are really remnants of exclamatory sentences in which the nouns had a construction. (See Ellipses, page 332.) Some exclamatory nouns cannot be distinguished from interjections: *zounds, fudge, rubbish,* etc. But usually the term interjection is limited to exclamatory syllables that are not nouns. (See Interjections, page 254.)

9. Nominative absolute. A frequent source of wrong syntax and fuddled idiom in school composition is the ignorance of a common construction called "nominative absolute." This is a noun or pronoun used in a detached way, not as a part of the grammatical construction, to indicate some condition or circumstance. (For the absolute uses of pronouns see page 201.) The noun is generally modified by a participle.

86. Other *things* being equal, I prefer an August vacation.

87. *Weather* permitting, the exercises will be held on the lawn.

88. *God* willing, we shall forever be friends.

89. Such *barriers* having been removed, world prices began to grow more stable.

90. Anything can be accomplished by a poor method—given the ingenious *teacher.*

91. We used to trade knives *sight* unseen.

92. There being no *objections,* the minutes were adopted as read.

93. The rustling of paper as hundreds of women turned their pages at the same moment (such *men* as were awake being content to understand nothing) made a sound like the sudden beating of rain against a window.

Absolute nouns may be modified by adjectives or phrases.

94. Promise me, *honor* bright, that you will be polite to her.

95. Then Rachel, her *eyes* all aglow with mischief, proposed a toast to hoes and rakes.

96. So shall it ever be, *world* without end.
97. *Thanks* to my trench-coat, I kept quite dry.
98. Albert now mounted the platform—one *arm* in a sling and one *leg* in a plaster cast—to make a more stirring appeal.
99. There is a narrow sandbar running into it, very deep *water* on one side, on which I helped boil a kettle of chowder.

This absolute nominative made by a phrase ("leg in a cast," "water on one side") seems to resemble a curious group of idioms in which the nominative is repeated: "hand over hand, face to face, bit by bit." These are called absolutes, because it would be possible to supply participles ("one hand being put above the other hand") and because they express conditions of the action in a detached way. Some further examples are:

100. We walked along *arm in arm.*
101. He could recite it *word for word.*
102. Its noble gardens rise, *terrace above terrace.*
103. They sat *side by side.*

Another group of idioms formed by pairs of nouns might be classed as absolutes: "bind hand and foot," "smite hip and thigh," etc. But they are more like adverbial nouns. (See page 187.)

Absolute nouns are sometimes accompanied by infinitives.

104. The surveyor urged us to come to an understanding, his stone *marker* on the road to be accepted as a starting point.
105. We decided to strike out at random the first day, each *man* to use his own best judgment in prospecting.

For noun clauses as absolutes, see page 353.

It may happen, though very rarely, that an ambiguous participle makes it impossible to tell whether a noun is absolute or has another construction.

106. Any child, *given* the chance, will become a tyrant.

Perhaps *chance* is an absolute ("the chance having been given"), but more likely *given* modifies *child* ("if given the chance").

A nominative absolute is described by the grammars as a kind of irregular modifier of the verb, showing the time or reason or condition or circumstance of the action. This is a true description of the absolute as it has appeared in English classics. But twentieth-century story-writers freely employ it as an adjective modifier, setting down the absolute nouns to describe some person or scene or object.

107. Silvio Preston was angry—his sparse little *frame* taut, his little gray *beard* bristling electrically.

108. The morning was warm and fine—the *country-side* all a-blossom, the new *leaves* bursting and preening themselves in the sun.

Of course these absolutes could be said to modify *was* or to explain the adjectives *angry* and *fine,* but the writers show no such purpose; they have simply written detached nouns that describe the angry man and the fine morning. How purely adjectival the absolutes appear to young writers may be seen in the next sentence, where an absolute is made parallel with two passive participles.

109. The paraders, drenched, *eyes* smarting, but determined, had forged to the very gates.

These vagrant and happy-go-lucky absolutes are closely akin—so far as meaning goes—to the non-modifying *with* phrases that flood modern journalism—for example: "The programs gave credit where credit was due—*with* the names of the officers of the club almost as prominent as the list of musical members."

Does the *with* phrase modify *gave?* No one can affirm what it modifies or that it modifies anything. (See the comment on *with,* page 296.) The phrase is as detached in meaning as a nominative absolute would be—"the names of the officers being almost as prominent." So it might be proper to class the non-modifying *with* among the absolutes—as far as meaning goes. But the mechanism of syntax is entirely different: an absolute is defined by all grammars as a noun without

construction; the noun in a *with* phrase is the object of a preposition. Compare the two following sentences.

110. With this obstacle surmounted, the next step seemed easy.
111. This obstacle having been surmounted, the next step seemed easy.

The *with* phrase in sentence 110 has the form of a modifier; *obstacle* is the object of *with*. But in sentence 111 *obstacle* has no syntax; it is absolute.

A sensitive author who keeps the whip hand of his words is chary of absolutes, using them only as the instruments of well-defined purpose; the slap-dash writer throws absolutes into a story without any consciousness of what his words are doing, leaving readers to struggle with his syntax as best they can. The talented writer, even if careless or ignorant, will somehow contrive to make his absolutes intelligible; but any ordinary pupil is in danger of ruining his sentences with them. Hence the experienced teacher discourages them in school composition. Even gifted pupils are unlikely to add any grace or strength to a theme by the use of absolutes. Pupils who are not gifted—the vast majority—are always in danger of being betrayed by absolutes into half-sentence faults and ridiculous awkwardness.

Another strong objection to absolutes is that they are a stilted and pseudo-literary form of expression. The story that abounds in absolutes is not likely to furnish a single example of an absolute that is put into the mouth of a speaker. Honest and unaffected speech seldom employs these artificial noun-plus-participle groups that would sound so pompous and unnatural.

An irate contributor to the *English Journal* once vented the following sentence about a certain kind of grammar teaching:

The only imaginable reason why teachers spend so many hours on an obscure construction like the nominative absolute is because teachers understand that construction and pupils do not.

If there are teachers who waste precious hours for that reason, they should be imprisoned for life. We should all recognize the weakness of our natures which makes us prone to teach in detail what we know thoroughly. If we stress nominative absolutes just because we are familiar with them, we sin grievously. The purpose of section 9 is not to encourage the teaching of a technicality, but to show that nominative absolutes are not "an obscure construction." They abound in all current literature; they flood into themes; they pervert many sentences; they are alive and flourishing and interesting on every hand.

10. Nominative by apposition. If a noun is in apposition with a nominative noun, it is said to be nominative also. (See section E.)

C. The Objective Constructions of Nouns

1. The direct object. No construction is taught with more assurance or explained more glibly in textbooks than the direct object of a verb. Children apprehend it more readily than they do any other construction. And yet the philosophical grammarian finds no other construction so difficult to define. Jespersen exclaims: "The notional relations between verbs and their objects are so manifold that they defy any attempt at analysis or classification." He instances the standard definition of an object as "the receiver of the action," and comments thus: "In 'the boy saw the moon' we must certainly say that the boy is more affected than the moon."

Fortunately the object of a verb is far less mysterious to a pupil than to a philosopher. Pupils seldom raise arguments about the amount of action received by a heavenly body or a great city or an ocean. But teachers do well to realize how different grammar is from astronomy. Grammar ought not to say that "a boy performs an action upon the moon," but that the verb represents an action as passing. In "They demolished the house" action passes to the house with a ven-

geance; in "I feared the house" no action whatever passes to the building. Yet *house* is an object in one case just as much as in the other. Grammar is not concerned with an effect on lumber or brick, but only with the verbal arrangement that has the form of an action passing to the receiver of an action. Grammar does not deal with the actions of a boy and the moon on each other, but with the action that passes from one *word* to another *word*.

This section deals only with nouns that are objects. Other words and groups that may be objects—such as pronouns, verbals, clauses, direct quotations—are described under their proper headings.

The best description of a direct object for school use is "a word that receives the action of the verb without any preposition." But teachers succeed best by beginning with some examples of objects. The only way that grown-ups or children learn about objects is by seeing a few of them, growing familiar with them, and gradually realizing by experience when words are or are not called objects. Such a set of sentences as the following would serve as an introduction to objects:

112. Percy sent a *message*.
113. I drank a *glass* of lemonade.
114. She sharpened her *pencil*.
115. Miss Wyman is leaving *town*.
116. The conductor will help the *cripple*.
117. Can't you cut a smaller *slice?*
118. Take some more *nails* in your pocket.
119. They warned the *boy* of his danger.
120. Where did you lose the *road?*
121. Have you changed the *oil?*

The attack on each sentence should be of this sort: "What is the verb in the sentence? What is the subject of the verb? Did Percy send anything? Yes, he sent a message. *Message* is the object of *sent*. What is the verb in sentence 113? What is the subject? Did I drink anything? Yes, of

course, I drank some lemonade. But that is not grammar. What word does the sentence say I drank? Yes, as a matter of grammar I drank a glass. *Glass* is the object of *drank*. This is the difference between a soda-counter and a grammar lesson. The grammar of the sentence is that I drank a glass."

The best formula for developing ability to recognize objects is "Did (.....) anything?"—supplying in the parentheses the subject and the verb. "Did she sharpen anything? Did Miss Lyman leave anything? Did the conductor help anything?" The formula will not always apply. In sentences that contain predicate nominatives (He became an *expert;* he looked *ridiculous*) the answer seems to be, "Yes, he became something; yes, he looked something." So the formula must be supplemented: "But did he pass an action over to an expert? Did he perform the action of looking on a thing called a ridiculous? No, the words explain the subject. They are predicates."

After a preliminary recitation on undoubted objects in short sentences the teacher must begin to introduce variants. The earliest and most useful of these is a preposition between the verb and a noun: "Percy sent for a taxi." Did Percy send anything? No, he sent for something. *Taxi* is the object of *for*. If a teacher has taught prepositions before beginning to teach objects of verbs, he can now count on a response from the class when he distinguishes between object of a preposition and object of a verb. The distinction is wide-reaching and deeply important: it shows the difference between a part of the framework of a sentence (the direct object) and a modifying phrase, *for a taxi*.

It is perfectly logical to argue that *sent for* is a verb. Most grammarians do argue that certain prepositions like *for* and *at* may be considered a real part of the verb, since the prepositions can be retained in a passive form: "a taxi was sent for, the goods were looked at." One objection to teaching that *taxi* is the object of *sent for* was explained in Chap-

ter 5—namely, that if a pupil calls one preposition part of the verb, he cannot see why any preposition is not part of the verb. He would probably think—he would be justified in thinking—that nouns were the objects of *is according to* and *went in spite of* and *walked on up to*. The distinction between *looked at* and *looked notwithstanding*—so absurdly obvious to a grammarian—is not marked off at any definite line, but depends on the subjective condition of a reader's mind. Good teaching cannot be done with these vague and mystical feelings, but only with clearly defined, objective differences. There is only one definite line of distinction between objects of verbs and objects of prepositions: not to allow any preposition to be called part of the verb.

The academic mind is apt to be intolerant of such a hard-and-fast distinction; it would like to have pupils liberally trained "to feel that a few prepositions are closely affiliated with verbs." But the academic mind should realize certain facts: (1) pupils are only beginning to learn about objects; (2) they must first learn the usual truth, that the object of a preposition is not the object of a verb; (3) they need at first one simple and serviceable scheme of syntax; (4) if they have to learn two schemes at once, they learn neither.

Many teachers never grasp what is meant by "a scheme of syntax." They assume—and naturally enough—that if there are two ways of explaining objects, one way must be wrong. The fact is that both ways are right. If we wish to explain *me* in "He looked for me," we may say that it is the object of *for* or the object of *looked for*. One explanation is just as right as the other—from the standpoint of academic logic. The choice of one way for school use is determined by only one consideration: Will it fit more consistently into the whole system of explaining constructions, and so help to simplify for pupils the study of constructions? One system of explaining is as *correct* as another. What we aim at is the *simplest* one, the plainest and most consistent one. This is our "scheme of syntax."

Which of the two following ways of teaching objects seems simplest for pupils?

(a) A noun that follows a preposition and a verb is sometimes the object of both the preposition and the verb; more often it is the object of the preposition only.

(b) A noun is always the object of either the preposition or the verb.

If any teacher finds in the course of experience that the first way insures better and more rapid understanding of the structure of sentences, he should choose that way. He should never choose it because of abstract logic or textbook authority.

When we teach the objects of verbs, we are not dealing with eternal truths or with conceptions that must be "right." We are only trying to arrange the simplest scheme for understanding how words are used in sentences. The analysis of the objectives after the verb *cost* will illustrate the whole matter. What are the constructions of the two nouns in "It cost Crusoe much labor"? Grammarians offer three solutions.

1. *Crusoe* is the direct object, and *labor* is adverbial objective.
2. *Crusoe* is the indirect object, and *labor* is the direct object.
3. *Crusoe* and *labor* are both direct objects.

Shall we jump to the conclusion that one explanation is right and the other two wrong? Shall we judge that some grammarians are corrupting the conception of language? These would be silly conclusions. The idiom is there; one analysis of it is as proper as another. Grammarians have not gone astray because they differ; no more will pupils be mistaught if they learn one analysis rather than another. A teacher's only reason for preferring one of the three explanations should be that it is more easily brought into line with a greater number of sentences that are similar in form—like these:

It caused me trouble.	It brought me no income.
It gave me pleasure.	It showed me a new idea.

In these sentences, and in hundreds like them, all grammarians agree that the *me* is an indirect object and that the

nouns are direct objects. What did it cause or give or show? It caused trouble, gave pleasure, showed an idea. To or for whom did it cause or give or show? To me. Why, then, would it not be good policy to adopt the similar explanation for the sentence about Crusoe? "It cost labor to or for Crusoe."

If some day it should occur to all teachers that one way of explaining may be as right as another way, a new era would dawn in the teaching of grammar. Our only purpose should be to find the explanations that best fit into the plainest and simplest scheme of analysis.

To say that *cost* may have two direct objects is logical; we ought not to be horrified at it. Neither should we be in love with it. We should welcome it if it will furnish a useful part of a system; we should discard it if it is exceptional and confusing. What are the facts about verbs that take two direct objects? Most grammarians name such verbs, but no two grammarians agree on the list which they select. The only verbs usually named are *teach, ask,* and *pay*. There is good reason and eminent authority for deciding that each of these can quite as well be said to take a direct object (that which is taught or asked or paid) and an indirect object (the person to or for whom something is taught or asked or paid). A few other verbs are more puzzling—for example: "to lead him a dog's life, to envy him his good fortune." If such exceptional idioms obtrude themselves into a recitation, and if a teacher feels it necessary to give an explanation, he may reveal the freakish fact that there seem to be two direct objects. But he will not lug these in as typical and useful for an elementary class. Almost never will a class encounter two objects of one verb.

What is the construction of *dollar* in "It cost a dollar"? The *Century Dictionary* says that *dollar* is a direct object; The *Oxford* says that *dollar* is an adverbial objective. Shall we conclude that one dictionary is perverting youth, or that

the other dictionary is "right"? We had best make a quite different inference—to wit: that neither way is wrong. Which explanation is more helpful to pupils? Since objects are more common and more easy to understand than adverbial objectives, we may well decide to stretch a point in favor of objects as often as we can. For instance, if *earth* is an object in "walk the earth," should we lose very much if we say that *mile* is an object in "walk a mile"? No grammar calls it an object; every grammar maintains that *mile* is adverbial, showing how far; but the dispute about *cost* shows that we need not worry ourselves unduly about the distinction.

"Cognate" objects are nouns that only repeat the meaning of the verb: "to live a life, to sleep the sleep of the just, to die the death of a martyr, to run a race." These are unlike normal objects in meaning; but in form they are objects, and no effort should be made to teach them as a separate class or as unreal.

Nouns are often the objects of verbals.

122. I should like to have a *holiday.*
123. By bunching their *hits* they scored more runs.
124. Not noticing her *hesitation,* he stepped ahead.

2. Object of a preposition. This most common construction of nouns is explained in Chapter 9.

3. The indirect object. An indirect object is a word that shows, without any preposition, to or for (or of) whom the action is performed.

125. We gave *father* a morris chair.
126. The attendant told the *children* the story of the suit of armor.
127. This gift assured *Mr. Noble* an income for life.
128. Hand the *lady* her coat.

The following verbs can be readily used by pupils for forming sentences that contain indirect objects: *bring, cook, forbid, grant, lend, offer, owe, promise, sell, send, show, toss, throw, write.*

It is usually possible to supply *to* or *for* with an indirect object, and so to explain it as an object of an "understood" word. There are two objections to permitting such an explanation: (1) Most grammars do not define an indirect object in terms of an understood preposition; we ought not to give children a notion which is not generally tolerated. (2) The policy of understanding words trains pupils to disregard the facts of syntax and to imagine monstrosities that never existed in the English language. For example, if an author has written, "She promised the child a playhouse," he has not used *to* before *child,* would on no account use *to,* and would not wish pupils to supply *to.* "Promised to the child a playhouse" is not English, but manufactured jargon. The word *child* is an indirect object, but "to the child" is only a phantom that appears in a grammar class. (Pupils are very fond of understanding words; the habit vitiates a true knowledge of syntax. See Ellipses, page 336.)

An indirect object often occurs with a noun clause.

129. We told the *milkman* that the dog would not hurt him.

It has been said in some grammars that an indirect object may be used without any expressed or implied direct object. The statement almost seems true in such idioms as the following: "He wrote me at great length; he wired me and then phoned me; he told me so himself." Other idioms of a similar sort are rare. In "He paid the men" *men* may be regarded as the direct object. In every sentence that contains only one object the object may properly be called direct. The safe and logical formula for teaching is that an indirect object always occurs in connection with a direct object.

4. Objective predicates. A noun that is used as a secondary object to explain the direct object—that is, to serve as predicate to the direct object—is called an "objective predicate."

130. Angina made Whitney a lifelong *sufferer.*
131. The committee elected Samson *chairman.*

132. Ye call me *chief.*
133. They named the child *Eleazer.*
134. I should consider it a plain *fraud.*
135. We found him a valuable *friend.*
136. Carlson thought this quite a clever *idea.*
137. I accepted his remark as a *compliment.* (See the discussion of *as,* page 307.)
138. People regarded his resignation as a *confession* of guilt.

Adjectives and participles are frequently objective predicates; see pages 241 and 270. For the infinitive as an objective predicate see page 289.

5. Retained objects. A sentence that contains an indirect object may be turned into the passive form in two ways: (1) The indirect object may be made the subject, as in the following sentence.

139. They permitted him only one meal a day: He was permitted only one *meal* a day.

The direct object, *meal,* is retained in a curious and illogical way after the passive verb. (2) The direct object may be made the subject.

140. Only one meal a day was permitted *him.*

In this sentence the indirect object *him* is retained after the passive verb.

The retaining of direct objects is more common than the retaining of indirect objects. Examples are shown below.

141. They were forbidden *entrance.* (Instead of "He forbade them entrance.")
142. He was assured a *high* rate of interest.
143. She was awarded huge *damages.*
144. I was paid eleven *dollars* a day.
145. We were allotted *seats* in the very top row.
146. Kipling was not offered the *laureateship.*
147. The railroad was granted a *right* of way.
148. On June first we were paid a *visit* by Sir Frank Dyson.
149. Here is a letter I should not believe genuine if I had not been sent the *photostat.*

Examples of retained indirect objects are as follows.

150. The use of the dock was not permitted *him.* (Instead of "They did not permit him the use of the dock.")
151. No honor was shown *them.*
152. Much attention was paid *her.*

There is no logical objection to saying that these retained objects are objects of the passive verbs; it is not inconceivable or philosophically impossible for passive verbs to have objects. But we shall probably make grammar harder for pupils if we talk about objects of passives, since this notion contradicts the general notion that we are trying to establish about verbs used transitively. We would ask, "Is it good policy to teach that passive verbs have objects?" No other question is of moment in making a choice of an explanation.

6. Adverbial objectives. A noun that shows time, distance, or amount (sometimes manner or place) is a kind of adverbial modifier and is called "an adverbial objective." Such nouns may modify verbs.

153. They ran three *miles.*
154. It will last a *lifetime.*
155. We have come a long *way* (or *distance* or *journey*) since then.
156. I can't sleep a *wink.*
157. Don't act that *way* (showing manner).
158. I saw you last *night.*
159. Wheat was selling for 42 cents a *bushel.*
160. The letter came the very *day* you left.
161. They live next *door* (place).
162. You must call him the first *thing* in the morning.

Adverbial nouns may modify adjectives.

163. This board is almost an *inch* wider.
164. His next flight was nearly an *hour* shorter.
165. Cut it exactly six *feet* long.
166. It is only three *days* old.
167. It's just a *shade* too dark.
168. This would be many *times* more expensive.

Adverbial objectives may modify adverbs.

169. He left three *days* ago. (*Ago* is an adverb; *days* shows how long ago.)

170. The moon is 238,000 *miles* away. (*Miles* modifies *away*.)

Plural nouns that show length of time are common: "worked three days, slept fourteen hours, will stay several months, had stood many years, is on duty six *nights* a week." Each of these nouns is modified by a numeral adjective that tells the extent of the time. The use of *days* and *nights,* without an adjective, to show at what time—"he works nights"—is considered a poor idiom.

The only noun commonly used to show manner is *way*.

171. Move your arms the *way* I showed you.

Sometimes other nouns appear to have the same function.

172. She was *penny* wise and *pound* foolish.

Curme gives the following examples: "came full *speed,* ran full *tilt,* bind *hand* and *foot*." Another possibility is:

173. They went at it *hammer* and *tongs*.

If *hammer and tongs* is adverbial, there can be no objection to saying that *side by side* is adverbial. The distinction is subtle and is a mere matter of form. No teacher should feel any interest in showing pupils such distinctions, but every teacher will be more effective if he understands them and knows why he can afford to brush them aside.

Some objective constructions are of course ambiguous, as in every other field of syntax. In "sailed the ocean" and "walked the streets" the nouns could be called adverbial, but common custom calls them objects. In "draws three feet of water" *feet* is generally explained as objective, but could be called adverbial.

No objective construction has any direct bearing on composition, and the adverbial objective is practically worthless as a grammar topic. The only value in teaching it is to

clear up one more corner of sentence structure, so that there may be no unexplored regions to render pupils timid.

It may well be asked: When nouns are used adverbially, why not call them adverbs? There would be one decided advantage in doing so, for then we should be following the standard policy of classing words by the work they do in any given sentence. There would be one big disadvantage: adverbial nouns are modified by adjectives; if we call them adverbs, we shall have difficulty in explaining why adjectives modify adverbs. The easier horn of the dilemma is probably to say, as all grammars do say, that adverbial nouns are nouns.

7. **Appositives.** If a noun is in apposition with an objective noun, it is said to be in the objective case. (See section E, following.)

D. Nouns Used as Adjectives

Most nouns, perhaps every one, can be used to qualify another noun: "a forestry station, flag signals, a watch crystal, laundry charges, mountain scenery." A vast number of nouns have been so commonly employed in this way that they are entered in the dictionaries as adjectives: "*household* appliances, *home* economics, *maple* furniture, an *ocean* voyage." Hence it would seem the way of wisdom and ease to call any noun an adjective if it is used in an adjectival way. We have seen in section C the reason why adverbial nouns had best be called nouns. The reason does not apply to adjectival nouns, since they are seldom modified by adjectives. They are often quite indistinguishable from adjectives, and they can usually be called adjectives without confusion.

Thousands of compound nouns have been formed by hyphenating a noun and its noun modifier: "pen-holder, pencil-sharpener, lawn-mower, flag-pole, wood-pile, truck-driver, street-cleaner."

E. The Appositive Construction

A noun set along side another noun to explain it is said to be "in apposition."

174. Dr. Auguste Piccard, the Brussels *physicist,* ascended over ten miles in his aluminum gondola.

175. Dr. Robert A. Millikan, the distinguished *head* of the California Institute of Technology, the *son* of a clergyman, delivered the commencement address.

Appositives are often introduced by *that is, for example, namely, viz., to wit.*

176. The unity of one of Hopper's pictures—that is, the *relationship* between the various parts—seems to be simply an accident.

177. Two immense difficulties confronted the budget-makers—namely, bonus *payments* and *taxes.*

Appositives are treated cursorily in grammars as a technical bit of syntax that requires mention, but that is important only because an appositive agrees in case with the noun to which it belongs. Yet in the grammar that aims at composition appositives are a highly significant topic. The most noticeable difference between the styles of an untrained pupil and a professional writer is that the pupil can make no use of appositives, and that the writer relies on them often. Appositives are of many kinds, and every kind can be a blessing when it is grafted into the style of a pupil. Infinitives are frequent, and very pleasant appositives; so are gerunds; adjectives and participles may be in an appositive position, and have power to beautify composition when they are so placed; pronouns in apposition can convert childish structures into the forms made by professional skill; phrases and clauses can brighten any theme if they are occasionally used appositively. When the experienced teacher comes to appositive nouns in a grammar course, he knows that he is at the border of The Land of Good Sentences.

This section of a grammar chapter is no place to wax

dithyrambic about the glories of appositives; our business here is to see the mere grammatical facts. But the nature of those glories should be indicated. Appositives are a way, the most widely useful way, of reducing the percentage of independent clauses in composition. One illustration will point the way to the whole strategy of applying appositives to the improvement of style. A good high-school writer may tell thus about a stage-setting: "The play called for only one very inexpensive setting, *and this was* the interior of a dug-out at the front during the World War." There is nothing wrong with those two coordinate clauses; authors often write a similar pair. But if these "and" sentences dominate a style, they produce an intolerable childishness. When any pupil learns to substitute—sometimes, as a variant—an appositive noun for the "and" clause, he is translated to a different realm of style. Any child who has the ability to stay in a high school can learn the mechanically easy device of omitting "and this was."

178. The play called for only one very inexpensive setting—*the interior* of a dug-out at the front during the World War.

The person who does not feel the infinite difference between the "and" sentence and the dashed-off-appositive sentence should never be employed to teach English. The observant teacher can see, in any half-hour that he devotes to noticing modern periodicals, two dozen appositives like the following half dozen:

179. It had been rumored that veal cutlets were to be served that day—the first *meat* the men had seen in weeks and weeks.

180. It was near the end of June that he met "Connie"—*Constance Norton,* that is—who had been finished at Miss Hilton's school.

181. No one has as yet faced a fact which has just come out—a *fact* which holds many lessons for those of our people who would pile on taxes without stint.

182. It is clear that distrust is the dominating psychological factor in this situation, *distrust* which has been growing since the days of Farrington.

183. His terms may include a demand for further reduction in principal, a premium, a bonus, or some imaginary expenses—*anything* that can be extracted from the already prostrate borrower.

184. Mr. H. M. Chevalier, in his admirable book, *The Ironic Temper,* the best *study* of Anatole France I have seen, has shown the disintegration of France's mind.

Suppose that some teacher devoted two minutes in each of ten successive recitations to a series of ten pairs of sentences, the first in each pair being made with "and," the second transformed by substituting an appositive. That would be true grammar teaching. That would accomplish something. Perhaps the last two pairs might venture up to the height of two appositives for one noun, like this:

185. (a) She watched the two figures pick up their bundles and go down the hill. One of these figures was a long shadow, and the other one was a short one.

(b) She watched the two figures pick up their bundles and go down the hill, a long *shadow* and a short *one.*

If a teacher knows how powerful appositives may be in transforming style, he finds the textbook treatment a marvelous comedy—as if a manual of zoology should dismiss the insects with half a page about the quality of six-leggedness.

The rest of this section describes certain peculiarities of the uses of nouns as appositives—that is, their uses as a mere matter of technical grammar. Appositives which are not nouns are explained under pronouns, clauses, participles, infinitives, etc.

1. Close or solid appositives. Some nouns are so closely connected in meaning with the nouns with which they are in apposition, forming one solid expression, that we hardly think of them as appositives: "his uncle Toby, General Pershing, Cardinal Hayes."

2. Appositives with connecting words. Some appositives are joined by such words as *or, namely, that is:* "The solidago, or *goldenrod;* the second quality—namely, its disagreeable *odor;* two of the hardwoods—to wit, *birch* and *beech.*"

3. The summing-up appositives. An appositive may be used after a list of particulars to show what common quality they have.

186. One farmer produces only poultry and eggs, another only perishable vegetables—*products* of the intensive method.

A good example of this type of appositive is *anything* in sentence 183 above.

4. Appositives that precede. Some authors have a fondness for beginning a sentence with a noun which is in apposition with a noun or pronoun that follows it.

187. A younger *son* in a proud family, Hume was really disinherited.

188. For years a *picture-restorer,* he had drifted into picture-falsification.

5. Appositives with a statement. A noun may be used to refer to a whole statement, as if in apposition with it.

189. The larger banks nearly always state the amount of liberty bonds separately—*a practice* which makes for confidence.

190. The wind was in the same direction as the cloud—*a fact* which made our weather prophet shake his head.

6. The agreement of appositives. Appositives usually agree in number with the nouns that they explain, but they need not agree.

191. These quick divinations, *a trait* inherited from his father, seemed almost supernatural to his admiring friends.

Appositives agree in case with the nouns that they explain (as can be seen when pronouns are appositives, page 202). The only way agreement shows in noun appositives is when the case is possessive.

192. At Elston's (the judge's) summer home he spent two restful months.

193. The secretary's, Mr. J. E. Haldane's, record shows no such vote.

Strict logic requires that the appositive nouns shall be possessive; if a rule is necessary, this is the only one to cite.

But teachers should know two facts which are more important than the rule: (1) Most authors would avoid the appositives, because the sound of them is disagreeable. (2) Literature shows many examples similar to "at her cousin, the banker's house," "staying at my Aunt's, Mrs. Bolton." Imagine what a sentence would result if the following appositive nouns were all made to agree in case with *David's:*

194. The Psalms are David's, the *King, priest, prophet* of the Jewish people.

7. Nouns that have no construction. A writer may set down a list of nouns to place them before a reader's mind, as if they were to be subjects of a verb, and then may leave these nouns stranded by shifting to another form of sentence, as follows:

195. *Poetry, literature* generally, the *study* of philosophy, a wide *acquaintance* with history—what does a manufacturer know of these things?

These nouns have no construction, but they could be explained as in apposition with *things.* Other examples of nouns without construction are as follows:

196. But their *dogs*—where are they?

197. Complete *annihilation* of a minute amount of matter—that is the engineering ideal.

Discussion of Some Subjects That Are Confused with Predicate Nominatives

The first step in clearing up the puzzles is to realize that a singular subject of a singular verb may be followed by a plural noun in the predicate.

1. Another *attraction* was the many shady *paths.*

Or a plural subject and its plural verb may be followed by a singular noun in the predicate.

2. These shady *paths* were another *attraction.*

Such a difference in number between subject and predicate nominative is common and is instantly recognized as normal syntax

when attention is called to it. But most textbooks do not mention the fact; some arguers about grammar seem never to have noticed the fact; and the result has been a tangle of wrong reasoning about sentences in which the subject and the predicate nominative are of different numbers. *The number of the predicate has no relation to the number of the verb;* it is the subject that agrees in number with the verb.

The second step in clearing up the puzzles involved in predicate nominatives is to understand thoroughly how to recognize subjects that come after their verbs.

(A) In questions and exclamations the subjects may be beyond the verb or between parts of it.

3. Where are the *ballots?*
4. How did the *prisoners* know?
5. Who are those *people* in the box?
6. How unimaginable are the *distances* between the stars!

The subject of a question or exclamation can best be found by turning the sentence into the form of a statement: "The ballots are where? The prisoners did know how? Those people in the box are who? The distances between the stars are how unimaginable?" When questions or exclamations are thus transposed, the subject appears before the verb.

(B) The most usual way in which subjects are placed beyond the verb is by means of *there* at the beginning of the sentence.

7. There were several small *caves* in the bank.

A subject is sometimes put between parts of the verb by means of *there.*

8. There was no *love* lost between them.
9. There was much *nonsense* talked by both parties.

(C) Another common way of throwing the subject beyond the verb is to begin the sentence with a preposition or an adverb.

10. Near the bottom of the hill was a narrow *bridge.*
11. Here could be seen endless *examples* of the destruction.

(D) If the initial position in the sentence is taken by an adjective or an object, the subject may be beyond the verb.

12. Sweet are the *uses* of adversity.
13. Not the slightest chance had *Billy* for securing such an honor.

(E) Subjects may sometimes be placed beyond the verb by poetical or archaic inversions of the normal order of the sentence.

14. Came the *dawn*.
15. Laughed, then, all the *elves* in glee.
16. Such a power was *he* in the community, that no one dared stand out against him.

(F) Just as infinitives and noun clauses that are subjects may be pushed beyond the verb by the expletive *it* (it is pleasant *to be* here; it is certain *that he is honest*), so there may be noun subjects that are introduced by the expletive *it*.

17. It is strange the *way* he avoids us.
18. It is an ancient *mariner*.

But these are disputable. (See expletive *it*, page 211.)

It can now be seen that in seeking for the subject of the verb there are three facts to be kept in mind:

(1) The subject is usually before the verb.

(2) The subject may be placed after the verb in one of the six ways that are mentioned in A, B, C, D, E, and F above. Of these six ways only one is erratic or debatable—number E, the poetical inversion, which is rare in prose. Unless there is definite proof that the subject has been transposed in one of these ways, we must conclude that the subject is in front of the verb.

(3) The subject agrees in number with the verb.

The teacher who remembers these three simple facts need never be flustered in the search for any subject. But he may be misled occasionally if he is not familiar with the points explained in the rest of this discussion. It might be hard to imagine how any intelligent mind could be confused in the analysis of this sentence: "The man that bowed to you was he." The sentence is of a familiar type, stating that a certain man (described as the one that bowed) is "he"—that is, the person who has been previously mentioned. *Man* is the subject; *he* is the predicate.

But consider another sentence that is similar in form: "A right gallant man was he." Why do we not say that *man* is the subject here? We feel that *he* is the subject, that the sentence is a poetical inversion of "He was a right gallant man." No doubt a large majority of teachers and grammarians would agree that *he* is the subject. But we can see the possibility of a debate;

we can see how philosophical minds might contend that *he* is a predicate.

How can we be certain of the subject in this next sentence? "A quite different apparatus is the Iceolator." Did the writer think of *apparatus* as the subject and mean that the "next apparatus to be described is the Iceolator"? Or did he mean that "the Iceolator is a quite different apparatus"? If we see his sentence out of context, we have no way of knowing surely which way he expected it to be understood. Arguing about the subject is absurd, for one judgment may be as valid as the other. But we are justified in putting the case thus: "In modern prose we expect the subject to come before the verb; we shall call *apparatus* the subject unless there is clear proof that the writer was making an inversion."

What is the subject in "A dainty plant is the ivy green"? We do not usually say that a class of objects (plant) is one of the class (ivy). We do not, for instance, say that "a tree is an oak"; we might naturally say that "an oak is a tree." The sentence about the ivy would not be sensible if it affirmed that "a dainty plant is always ivy"; the sentence seems to mean that "ivy is a dainty plant." The use of *a* and *the* is another clue: we never say that "a tree is the oak" or that "a mammal is the seal," but that "the oak is a tree, the seal is a mammal." Hence we conclude that the sentence about the ivy is transposed and that *ivy* is the subject.

But in "Another dainty dessert is shredded avocado" (a plain statement in a cook-book) we see no reason to suspect that the writer was waxing poetical. We judge that *dessert,* coming before the verb, is the subject unless there is strong reason for inferring otherwise. We merely admit that *avocado* might, conceivably, be the subject if we found the sentence in poetry.

Now we are prepared to examine subjects in certain sentences which learned grammarians differ about. We may well begin with this one. "So burdensome were the taxes that the people became desperate." No grammarian could deny that *taxes* is the subject and *burdensome* a predicate adjective, for the plural verb makes any other explanation impossible. Is the construction different when the adjective is replaced by a singular noun? "Such a griev-

ance were the *taxes* that the people became desperate." It would seem only common sense to say that in this sentence also *taxes* is the subject of *were*. Does the next sentence show any different sort of syntax? "A strange sight were these solemn penguins." Since no grammarian explains why the singular noun *sight* should be called the subject of the plural verb *were,* and since every grammar gives warrant for calling the plural noun the subject, we have to judge that the sentence means, "These penguins were a strange sight," and that *sight* is the predicate.

We may next inquire about a sentence written by one of the most eminent of British philologists, Sweet: "The only difficulty in Finnish are the changes undergone by the stem." If the sentence is a proper one, we can only say that there has been a most curious inversion, one that has no parallel in the sentences of literature. We need not argue that the sentence is "wrong." We had best leave the question of right or wrong to Sweet's philological peers. What concerns us is to discover the advice that will be most generally a safe guide for pupils. It is this: Decide what the subject of your verb is; make the subject agree with the verb; write sentences in one of these two forms:

{The only difficulty is the changes.
{The changes are the only difficulty.

{Herschel's great work was his star gauges.
{The star gauges were Herschel's great work.

Other illustrations are:

{An interesting feature is the illustrations.
{The illustrations are an interesting feature.

{Their habitat is the deep gorges.
{The deep gorges are their habitat.

The confusion between subject and predicate noun is a common one; it is baffling to any person who has not learned that a singular predicate may be joined to a plural subject, or a plural predicate to a singular subject. In either case the subject ought to agree with the verb.

A frequent cause of confusion between subjects and predicates is the pronoun *what*. (See page 224.)

CHAPTER 18

THE CONSTRUCTIONS OF PRONOUNS

The classes and forms of pronouns are explained on pages 62, 404. The so-called "pronominal adjectives" (*this* year, *each* one, etc.) are described under adjectives, page 238. This chapter deals only with the syntax of pronouns. It is arranged in five sections: (A) The Constructions of Independent Pronouns, (B) The Antecedents of Independent Pronouns, (C) The Constructions of *It,* (D) The Constructions of Relatives, (E) The Constructions of Interrogative Pronouns.

A. The Constructions of Independent Pronouns

Pronouns are sharply divided into two classes by a complete difference in syntax: (1) a class of relative pronouns which form subordinate clauses, (2) a class of independent pronouns which form independent clauses when they are subjects of verbs. The usual division of independent pronouns into personals, demonstratives, and indefinites is merely technical and has no significance for composition. But the understanding of what "independent" means is of prime importance for composition. An independent pronoun which is the subject of a verb forms an independent simple sentence.

1. *She* was popular.
2. *They* had not returned.
3. *That* was the reason for hesitating.
4. *Each* must decide for himself.

The pupil who never learns to classify pronouns as personal, indefinite, and demonstrative will lose nothing that counts in a knowledge of sentence-structure; but the pupil who never learns the meaning of "independent pronoun" will be at the mercy of comma blunders of this type: "The steel cable was frayed, it might not hold." Though the thoughts

are closely related and belong in one sentence, they cannot be put into a grammatical sentence by a pupil who does not understand that pronouns like *it* and *this* and *others* form independent statements when they are subjects of verbs. The pupil who lacks sentence sense can never acquire it until he learns why the comma is wrong before independent pronouns that are subjects.

Another type of independent pronoun is the interrogatives—*who, which,* and *what.* These are explained in section E. No reference is made to them in the rest of section A.

Most of the constructions of independent pronouns are so similar to the constructions of nouns that they need no explanation in addition to what is given in Chapter 17. But a few comments may be useful. They are in this order: nominative constructions, objective constructions.

1. The nominative constructions

Subject of a verb. Only occasionally are independent pronouns found beyond the verbs of which they are the subjects.

5. There is *this* to be said.
6. "Now," said *she,* "we can be more comfortable."

Predicate nominative. Personal pronouns are often made predicates after a verb that has *it* for its subject. In this construction they should, by all the logic of syntax, have the nominative form: "It is *I;* it is *they;* it is *she.*" The use of *him, her,* or *them* as predicates is generally conceded to be a vulgarism. *Me* as a predicate is rather common in educated speech and sometimes occurs in literature—for example, in Shelley's "Be thou *me.*" The grammarians do not feel any horror at *me* for a predicate; most of them speak of it as a common idiom that must be recognized. Whitney's judgment as long ago as 1877 was that *it is me* "has become so common that it is even regarded as good English by respectable authorities." Curme's opinion, expressed in 1931, was this: "We often find the accusative in good authors in serious

style. . . . The plain drift of our language is to use the accusative of personal pronouns as the common case form." An editor of the *Oxford Dictionary* (T. C. Onions) says in his *Advanced Syntax* that *it is me* is used by educated speakers in England. Every teacher would do well to ponder these testimonies before devoting precious hours to a campaign against *me*. The use of *me* in the predicate is not a vulgarism; even the use of *him, her,* and *them* is not in the same class of vulgarity as the use of *good* for *well* or *done* for *did*.

Address and exclamation. These constructions of pronouns are unusual, but do occur occasionally.

7. *You* of the coming generation, gird yourselves. (The comma shows that *you* is not the subject of the verb, but is used in address.)

8. *He!* Why, he's a knave. (But it is usually possible to explain an exclamatory pronoun as elliptical.)

Nominative absolute. This construction is far less common with personal pronouns than with nouns, but the grammars can cite examples like these: "he being gone (Thackeray), I not knowing (Trollope), we sitting (Tennyson), they sitting at their ease in gigs (Thoreau)." The absolute with *it* is common, as in "it being near the end of August."

9. *It* having come to my knowledge that the title has been misunderstood, I take this opportunity of stating—etc. (Preface to *Advanced English Syntax.*)

The absolute with indefinites and demonstratives is frequent.

10. Several months ago a bank examiner called my attention to two statements of the same bank, the second *one* showing serious losses.

11. Not until I had been served my food by this inattentive creature—*some* of it being what I had ordered and *some* not—did I catch a view of Miss St. George.

12. The attainment of eternal life is impossible otherwise, *those* who take that mystical line of thought not always perceiving that the emphasis they lay on the "here and now" is really an emphasis laid on the body and an injunction to make use of it while it is "here and now" for the purpose.

Pupils seldom produce a pleasant impression with an absolute pronoun and frequently produce a decidedly unpleasant effect. They never need the idiom and would do well to avoid it.

Apposition. Pronouns may be in apposition, though the construction is unusual with personals.

13. The woman in green, *she* who is now unfolding her fan, wishes to speak with you.

The indefinite and demonstrative pronouns are frequent as appositives and may be a very effective device in maturing the style of pupils.

14. There were two doors at the rear of the cottage—*one* into the kitchen and *one* into a woodshed.
15. He has two passionate dislikes: *one* for "as though," the *other* for "so as to."
16. The best example of Eddington's humor—*that* of discarding infinity—was widely quoted.

All may be used appositively to sum up a preceding list of particulars.

17. The tramps, the agitators, the misguided laborers—*all* of them alike—were herded off to jail.

More often the nouns are left stranded in a broken-off construction (see page 194), and *all* appears as the subject of the verb.

18. The tramps, the agitators, the misguided laborers—*all* were herded off to jail.

An *all* in this sort of sentence may not refer to any substantive, but to actions that are merely implied by verbs, as illustrated in the following sentence:

19. The heart of the operation is an ingenious machine wherein the rayon thread is spun, chemically treated, washed, dried, and twisted—*all* in one continuous machine.

There is one sort of apposition of indefinite pronouns which is so closely modifying and so obscure that it is unlike true

apposition and is seldom so thought of, but for which there is no other explanation. This is seen commonly in the following uses of *all, each,* and *both:*

20. Our cousins *all* remembered us at Christmas.
21. We *each* felt chagrined.
22. My friends are *both* well-to-do.

The pronouns are used appositively, as if they meant "our cousins, all of them, remembered; my friends, both of them, are." The appositive *all* occurs in a great variety of idioms: "they *all* do it; gave us *all* a scolding; the men were *all* out at lunch; the rest have *all* been dismissed." An even more obscure appositive is found in the use of *each other* and *one another.*

23. The two squirrels seemed to dislike *each other.*
24. The weary hikers tried to encourage *one another.*

A strict analysis indicates that *each* and *one* are in a kind of apposition with the subjects of the verbs, as if we said, "The two squirrels, each of them, seemed to dislike the other." Such an explanation distorts the feeling of the idiom and should never be required of pupils. The scholar as well as the pupil recognizes *each other* and *one another* as indivisible objects. Indeed the hunt for apposition is sometimes doomed to failure, as in the following sentence:

25. This is like the classic example of the village that undertook to support itself by taking in *one another's* washing.

Agreement in number with the verb. The discussion of the agreement of nouns with verbs in Chapter 17, page 167, applies to the agreement of pronouns. No added comment is needed for pronouns, except perhaps to emphasize the plural pronouns that often come between a singular subject and its verb and that strongly tend to attract the verb into a wrong plural. The following singular verbs are correct:

26. Each one of us *is* to be on duty two hours.
27. Every mother's son of them *thinks* so.

2. The objective constructions

Objects of verbs, verbals, and prepositions. There is a strong tendency (which sometimes shows itself even in literature) to put the second of a pair of objects in the nominative case. The second object should be objective, as in these sentences:

28. Just between you and *me,* I think so too.
29. Mrs. Porter asked Lucile and *her* to distribute the blanks.

By far the most common error is made with *I* in place of *me.*

Indirect object. Pronouns are frequently used as indirect objects: "show *her* this, send *them* a line, give *this* a coat of paint, save *you* some time, sparing *them* the trouble."

Objective predicate. It is humanly possible to use a pronoun as an objective predicate, but the construction is rare and sounds unreal.

30. Who made him *this?* (That is, who turned him into this sort of creature?)

Retained objects. These have been explained on page 186.

Adverbial objective. Independent pronouns have no constructions of an adverbial kind. *That* and *this* in such expressions as "that far" and "this high" are called adverbs by the dictionaries.

Exclamatory *me*. The use of *me* in "ay me" and "dear me" is a unique bit of syntax that cannot be explained by any parallel construction in English.

Apposition. A personal pronoun in apposition with an objective pronoun or noun should be in the objective form.

31. Why not give it to the two unluckiest ones—Hester and *me?*

B. The Antecedents of Independent Pronouns

1. Pronouns without antecedents. The usual function of a pronoun is to refer to a previous noun or pronoun, called its "antecedent," in the same or the preceding sentence. But sometimes pronouns make no such reference; they may indi-

cate people generally, or persons or things that have not been named and that cannot be named.

32. *We* are always in danger when *we* are flattered.
33. *You* never learn any weather signs in Southern California.
34. *They* say in Italy that there is less money and less wisdom than *we* think.
35. *One* often thinks of a bright retort just a second too late.
36. *He* is a bold man who asserts a universal negative.
37. *She* who would fascinate men must listen to them.
38. *It* promises to be fair tomorrow.

These uses of pronouns that have no antecedents are called "impersonal." The impersonal uses of *it* are described in section C below.

American pupils seldom use impersonal *we, one, he,* or *she,* but frequently use impersonal *you, they,* and *it.* If a pupil has never learned the difference between the impersonal use and the use for reference to an antecedent, he is likely to bungle by combining the two uses in one sentence, thus: "The upstairs windows were still wide open; *they* hadn't had time to close *them.*" There is nothing ungrammatical or unpleasant about well-used impersonal pronouns, but the untrained pupil may blunder sadly in his heedless use of them.

2. Pronouns that refer to sentences. *This* and *that* may refer to the thought of the entire sentence that precedes.

39. Mr. Newcomb proposed that each of us should subscribe ten dollars. *This,* however, seemed unfair.

3. Definite antecedents. Except for the pronouns that refer to sentences and the pronouns that are impersonal, every pronoun should normally have some definite substantive for its antecedent. Authors are, of course, sometimes careless or indifferent about strict reference to an antecedent, and teachers may sometimes be over-insistent on strict reference. But pupils should understand that they are being trained to be conscious of the reference of pronouns, as authors are usually con-

scious, and to feel responsible for furnishing every pronoun with a definite antecedent unless it has a proper impersonal construction.

4. Pronouns before their antecedents. A pronoun may anticipate its antecedent, so that a reader does not know what the reference is until he has read on.

40. When *they* were disturbed, the *prairie-dogs* ducked into their holes.

41. Not till you have felt *it* burning in your own heart can you know what *jealousy* is.

42. Though little attention has been paid to *them* in the American press, important *events* have recently taken place in India.

5. Agreement with the antecedent. If a pupil is aware of an antecedent, he usually makes a pronoun agree with it in gender, person, and number. But one failure to make agreement is so common that it is harped on in every textbook of the mechanics of composition—namely, using the plural *they* to refer to a singular like *everybody* or *everyone* or *each person*. This so-called error has been committed by countless authors during the past four centuries and is unblushingly committed nowadays by hundreds of writers and critics and professors of English, who consider that the grammatical *he* for the singular antecedent is mere purism. For example, Addison said of Sir Roger: "If he sees anybody else nodding, he either wakes *them* himself or sends his servant to *them*. . . . When everybody else is upon *their* knees." The plural idea in "anybody"—that is, any one of all those persons—is so prominent in the mind of the writer that he may refer to this plural thought with *they*. If the singular antecedent is a negative (no one), the singular pronoun *he* seems illogical. Hence Sir Gilbert Murray writes: "No one dares to say so in public, but it is time *they* began." If an author is telling about what is true in many cases, he may feel that a singular pronoun would be untrue to his meaning: "Whenever a high-school dance ends noisily, as nowadays *they* often do."

Jespersen has three pages of close-packed quotations of the "everybody . . . their" type; he says that the construction occurs "innumerable times" in Jane Austen, and cites from Malory, Shelley, Scott, George Eliot, Oscar Wilde, Kipling, Stevenson, and a dozen others. Other grammarians add their piles of evidence to the same effect, and do not seem horrified. No grammarian argues that these authors are either ignorant or careless; each grammarian argues that the idiom of a plural pronoun for a singular antecedent flourishes in literature and must be recognized. The *Oxford* says, "The pronoun referring to *everyone* is often plural."

What should a teacher do? The answer is not easy and must be sought by each teacher for himself. In most schools it has to take this form: There is a strong prejudice among educators against the plural pronoun; the pupil who does not learn about this prejudice will often be accused of ignorance; he will often boggle with "they" in ways that the most liberal scoffer at purism would not sanction; hence it seems wise to require pupils to conform to the prejudice.

One . . . he. American pupils seldom use the impersonal *one.* American authors often use *he* to refer to *one,* as Irving Babbitt does in "if *one* sets *himself* the task." Scrupulous British authors use *one* or *oneself* or *one's* for referring to *one.*

43. If one had to live one's life over again, one might do worse than make one's home there. (Froude, quoted by Poutsma)

This is a nicety which few American pupils could ever feel at home with.

6. Possessives of personal pronouns. There are two kinds of possessive pronouns. The first kind is the forms that cannot be used before nouns: *mine, ours, yours, hers, theirs:* "This is *mine; ours* is a better one; it is no concern of *hers.*"

The possessives of the second kind are *my, our, your, his, her, its, their.* These are often intensified by the adjective *own:* "my own home, its own food." There are two reasons

in favor of teaching that these forms are adjectives: (1) they qualify nouns; (2) in Latin, French, and German the corresponding forms are inflected adjectives, and teachers of those languages would like to have pupils prepared by English grammar to recognize the possessives as adjectives. The principal reason against classing the possessives as adjectives is that we should then be setting up a distinction between the possessives of pronouns and the possessives of nouns; if we do not call possessive nouns adjectives, it is hard to explain why we call possessive pronouns adjectives. The classification of possessive pronouns is a sheer formality, for no one questions that they can be considered one way as logically as the other. The classification is a matter of policy. Will one way of classifying fit more neatly than the other into the simplest scheme of syntax? It seems probable that if the possessives of nouns are not called adjectives, the possessives of pronouns ought not to be called adjectives.

C. The Constructions of "It"

1. *It* with an antecedent. *It* may refer to some noun or pronoun.

44. The *pencil* was still standing upright on my table. *It* had not been blown over.
45. The *sin* is bringing *its* own punishment.

It may refer to an entire statement or to an action indicated by the verb.

46. A year later they were married, and a very happy marriage *it* proved to be.
47. The charge is false, and you know *it* (that is, you know *that the charge is false*).
48. All the magazines have been neatly sorted. Who did *it?* (that is, "Who did the sorting?")

Some severe critics would object to such indefinite reference as that in sentences 46-48, but it is so common in literature that other critics would consider the objection carping pedantry. If the reference is to an idea less immediate and obvious

than in those examples, the writer would usually be considered careless—as in the two following sentences:

49. We assume that a profound study of the law ought to produce a legislator, a judge, or an advocate. Yet we know that *it* rarely happens. (Walter Lippmann)

50. The delicacy may be appetizing enough, but its name affords no evidence of *it*. (Frank H. Vizetelly)

At any rate, pupils are better taught when they are required to use *it* for reference to a definite word. If they try to emulate the indefiniteness of Lippmann and Vizetelly, they are more than likely to go astray.

A good introduction to a common and perplexing construction of *it* with predicate pronouns and relative clauses is the following quotations in which *it* refers to persons:

51. An elderly spinster was seen approaching. *It* was Miss Briggs.

52. The young man was a stranger to me, but I knew in a moment who *it* was.

53. Then we were brought before the magistrate; and behold *it* was the very man we had seen in the woods.

54. If there is a man in the world who needs the love of a wife, *it* is the literary man.

To say that the antecedent of *it* is *spinster, man,* and *magistrate* rather violates our sense of the meaning of the pronoun, for we do not ordinarily refer to persons with *it*. If we really meant to speak of a spinster or a magistrate with a pronoun, we should use *she* or *he*. The use of *it* is so different from the usual personal reference of pronouns that we feel something decidedly peculiar about it. We may call the use, for convenience, an "indefinite" *it*. The construction is prominent in school work—perhaps because of the publicity everywhere given to the idiom "it is I, it is they," etc. This indefinite use of the personal *it* is the key to a remarkable set of constructions in which a relative clause is attached to a predicate nominative, of the following type:

55. It is not she *that causes the trouble.*

The indefinite *it* is discussed on page 229.

2. Impersonal *it*. *It* may be used as a subject in speaking of weather, time, or unnamed conditions.

56. *It* looks as if *it* might snow.
57. *It* is clearing in the west.
58. *It* is now half past two.
59. *It* will be winter before we know it.
60. What day of the month is *it?*

Impersonal *it* occurs in a certain idiom that is on the lips of every pupil: "In the book *it* says." This use of *it* is not considered good idiom.

It may be used as an impersonal object which does not refer to anything that can be named.

61. I will fight *it* out on this line if it takes all summer. (The second *it* might be called personal, referring to the fighting, or might be called impersonal.)
62. We are going to rough *it* in New Mexico.
63. Now you'll catch *it*.
64. You're in for *it* now!
65. Hang *it* all!

3. Expletive *it*. *It* may be used to introduce a real subject that comes after the verb—an infinitive or a noun clause or sometimes a gerund.

66. It was not convenient at that time *to have* such an interview.
67. It is said in the prayer-book *that a person should prepare himself with fasting.*
68. It is no use *pretending* to be indifferent.

What was not convenient? To have such an interview was not convenient. What is said? That a person should prepare himself with fasting is said. What is no use? Pretending is no use. This *it* which is a subject only in form is called "the grammatical subject." A name that pleases and informs pupils is "dummy subject." The proof of an expletive *it* is that it introduces a real subject which is beyond the verb. *It* anticipates this real subject, and hence has been well called the "anticipatory" *it*.

The expletive *it* is not always at the beginning of a sentence.

69. A neater illustration *it* would be hard to find. (To find a neater illustration would be hard.)

70. He was a creature whom *it* would make your hair stand on end to meet in the dark.

What would make? "To meet whom in the dark" would make. Other examples of a similar construction of *it* with infinitives are as follows:

71. Do you think that *it* would be possible to make a lighter one? (The infinitive is the subject of *would be.*)

72. At what time the earliest Siberian migrations into Alaska occurred *it* is impossible to tell. (*To tell* is the subject of *is;* the *what* clause is the object of *to tell.*)

It frequently introduces noun clauses that come after *seem* and *appear.*

73. It seems to me *that his condition is improving.*

The noun clause introduced by *it* may precede *it.*

74. *That our present education gives small heed to discipline* it is scarcely necessary to assert. (The *it* is quite unnecessary, but is idiomatic.)

An expletive *it* may introduce an infinitive or a noun clause that is an object.

75. I found it hard *to pull* the board away. (*To pull* is the real object of *found.*)

76. I thought it my duty *to go.* (*To go* is the real object of *thought.*)

77. See to it that there is plenty of wood in the shed. (The *that* clause is the real object of *to.*)

There are rare sentences in which a noun subject may be said to be introduced by *it.*

78. It is incredible the *kind* of reading he enjoys. (That is, the kind of reading is incredible.)

But try to fit a similar analysis to the next sentence.

79. It is marvelous the *mistakes* they continue to make.

The result would be "The *mistakes* is marvelous"—which is hardly satisfactory. We may say that the verb is attracted

by the expletive *it,* or that the real subject is the singular idea of "their continuing to make mistakes." We are free to say what we like. The sentence is a good illustration of the truth that some idioms will not fit into any known system of explanations. The teacher who is unaware of this truth will sometimes be chagrined; the teacher who knows it and announces it to the class can be cheerful in the face of any grammatical mystery.

D. The Constructions of Relative Pronouns

1. Definition. A pronoun which forms a subordinate clause that modifies its antecedent is called a "relative" pronoun. Since a relative can be defined only in terms of subordinate clauses (see page 121), and since it is hard to teach subordinate clauses before a class understands relatives, a teacher is confronted with a peculiar difficulty at the outset of work with relatives. The difficulty need not amount to much for teachers who have the wit to avoid being philosophical. The philosophical mind feels impelled to begin with a definition which can be understood only by a person who already knows about relatives, and which is terrifying verbiage to a person who does not know. The mind of a skilful teacher instinctively avoids the preliminary definition and begins by exhibiting a fact—just one fact that can be examined without any reference to blinding generalities. On the board he writes a sentence that has no particular interest: "The car gave him good service for three years." Below this he writes another sentence that adds some interest: "Dustin bought it for twenty dollars." How can the two sentences be put into one without using *and* or *but?* After some maneuvering and suggesting the teacher extracts from the class a relative clause: "The car *that Dustin bought for twenty dollars* gave him good service for three years." This sentence is infinitely better material to work with than some insipid statement like "The book that I own is blue." Grammar ought to deal with matter that has some content—if possible, some romance or humor.

There is no estimating the difference between "the book" and "Dustin's twenty-dollar car" for teaching relative pronouns.

The relative clause that the class has constructed is a kind of sentence: it has a verb, *bought;* the subject of this verb is *Dustin.* Did Dustin buy anything? Yes, he bought *that.* Of course he actually did buy a car; but, as a matter of grammar, he bought *that,* which is a word that refers to *car* and means *car.* This group of words which cluster around *that* is not a sentence that could stand alone; it is a kind of adjective that describes *car.* It is called a "relative clause." The word *that* is a pronoun which "relates" to car, and is therefore called a "relative" pronoun. In its clause it has the construction of a noun: it is the object of the verb. From such a beginning the class may advance to a mastery of relative clauses, and finally be prepared for understanding a definition of them.

The term "relative" is meaningless, since all other pronouns regularly relate to an antecedent. A better name would be "clausal" or "conjunctive." But the world has agreed on the name "relative."

There are four relatives: *that, who, which,* and *what,* with the compound forms *whoever, whichever,* and *whatever.* Certain other words, especially *as* and *but,* have a sort of relative use and can be so classed; but they are better explained as conjunctions. *What* is a relative only by courtesy, since it never has an antecedent; it is treated separately, after the discussion of *that, which,* and *who,* on page 223.

2. The constructions of *that*. *That* is the most typical relative; when its constructions have been described, only certain special comments will be needed on the constructions of the other relatives.

When *that* comes next to its antecedent, it has the appearance of an appositive, and some pupils never really abandon the idea that it is an appositive. It never is. To call it an appositive would destroy the fundamental fact of its syntax, the fact which the experienced teacher bends all his energies to clarifying and establishing—namely: a relative has the con-

struction of a noun *within its clause.* No novice teacher can conceive the importance of "within its own clause" or the amount of strenuous reiteration that is necessary to impress it on pupils. It never will be impressed unless it is enforced by this injunction: "Lift the clause out of the sentence before you try to tell the construction of the relative pronoun." This means, interpreted in academic terms, that a pupil will stumble confusedly amidst wrong guesses until he learns that the first step of his operations must always be to perceive the clause detached from its surroundings. A simple illustration appears in this short sentence: "The one that you liked has been sold." Even a scholar's mind, however quickly and automatically it may work, has to go through the following steps before it can apprehend the structure of the sentence: "(1) There are two verbs; (2) *has been sold* and its subject form the first statement; (3) *liked* and its subject make a second statement; (4) the first statement is the main clause; (5) the second statement is the relative clause; (6) these two statements must be held separate in my mind before I can see the syntax; (7) I must see the relative clause separated from the main clause before I can know anything about its make-up." Much more must a pupil see the relative clause separated from the main clause; he must "lift it out" before he looks for the construction of *that.* After he has held up the relative clause for inspection, he must find the verb, then the subject of this verb; then he is in a position to see the construction of *that.* It is the object of *liked.*

Pupils are helped to an understanding of relative clauses if they are shown that a relative pronoun prevents its clause from being an independent sentence. The clause may have an independent subject—"whose name *we wanted* to learn"—but the presence of the relative "spoils" the independence of the clause. An effective epithet for relatives is "paralyzing words"; they render a clause impotent, unable to stand alone as a sentence. Compare the same device for subordinating conjunctions, page 306.

That usually has one of three constructions: (1) subject of the verb ("the finger that had been injured"), (2) object of the verb ("the fly that he killed"), (3) object of a preposition ("the article that I am referring to"). The preposition can never be placed before *that,* but must always come after it; hence it happens that many sentences end with prepositions —as: "I always disliked the friend that he was most fond of."

Other constructions would be unusual, but might happen to be written any day by a pupil in a theme. There might be a predicate nominative.

80. The strength of the influence *that* this companionship may be can hardly be exaggerated.

In the relative clause *companionship* is the subject of *may be,* and *that* is the predicate nominative.

That may be the object of a verb and have an infinitive for an objective predicate.

81. He was the most sarcastic lecturer *that* I have ever heard talk. (The clause is like "I have heard him talk.")

That could be an indirect object.

82. The only servant *that* he gave his full confidence was Ratner.

But this would be clumsy and unusual. It may be possible to construct clauses in which *that* is an objective predicate or a retained object, but these would be so outlandish that they would not be sensible.

One construction can be explained as an adverbial objective.

83. She came the very day *that* he left.

In the main clause *day* is an adverbial objective, modifying *came; that* may be said to be a relative with the same construction in the relative clause, modifying *left.* (See page 313.)

Such exceptional oddities are mentioned, not because they are of any importance in themselves, but because they illustrate the kind of attack that pupils should learn to make on a relative clause—to discover what the construction is by

substituting a more distinctive pronoun or a noun. Sometimes *whom* will show how a *that* is used; sometimes a noun, forming an independent sentence, will show; more often the personal pronouns are useful, because of their nominative and objective forms. A baffling construction will often be disclosed with surprising ease by an experiment with *he* or *him*.

Pupils often mistake the conjunction *that* for the relative *that;* they seldom need be confused if they will make a test with *who* or *which*. If, for instance, they are analyzing "He had an idea that I was making fun of him," they might naturally suppose that the clause was relative. But substitute *which*—"which I was making fun of him." The *which* is utterly without construction. Thus we see that *that* is a joining word, a conjunction, and that we are dealing with a noun clause. Apply the test in another sentence that looks similar to the one about making fun: "He had an idea that I was curious about"; the clause becomes "which I was curious about," and *which* is the object of *about*. The proof can be made convincing by other substitutes: "I was curious about *this,* about *it,* about the *idea,* about *him.*"

3. Agreement of *that* with its antecedent. When a pupil has become familiar with the idea that a relative always has some nominative or objective or possessive construction *within its clause,* he is prepared for the second half of the knowledge of how relatives are used: they agree with their antecedents in gender, person, and number. Gender is, of course, a sheer make-believe in English grammar (see page 395); no relative has any change of form to correspond to grammatical gender or to sex. The person of a relative may appear if it is the subject of a verb.

84. You may want to know why I, who *am* so fearless in thunderstorms, should be afraid of a gentle wind.

If *who* refers to a first person, *I,* its verb must have the form that would be used with *I;* any relative that is a subject de-

mands the verb form which belongs with the second person if its antecedent is of the second person; so for a third-person antecedent. The need for attention to the person of an antecedent is not frequent in school composition.

But the need for attending to the number of an antecedent is frequent. Ordinarily pupils use the proper number of a verb with their relatives, because the singular or the plural idea is prominent in their minds; but errors are sometimes caused by a plural that intervenes between the relative and the antecedent—usually *one*.

85. The only one of his anecdotes *that amuses* the class is the one about his dog Cicero.

86. *Another* of the dull passages *that stays* in my memory is the paragraph about the wrist-watch.

The type of structure that most often produces error is a superlative adjective with a plural noun.

87. This was one of the largest *orders that have* ever *come* to my desk.

The sentence means that "of all those large *orders that have come* to my desk, this was one of the largest." Since the idea of "the largest one" is prominent in the writer's mind, he is likely to forget the syntax and say "one of the largest orders that *has* ever come." Authors sometimes discard the requirements of syntax in such a sentence and use a singular verb.

Sentences of the type of 85-87 may be ambiguous.

88. One of the joys of life that *belong* to every boy and girl is the building of a playhouse in a tree.

The sentence may mean "the joys that belong" or "one that belongs."

A discussion of the curious relative clauses that have *it* for an antecedent is given at the end of this chapter, page 229.

4. Omission of *that*. When *that* is an object, it is frequently omitted.

89. I want the one [that] you have in your left hand.

90. All the cash [that] they had was hidden in a teapot.

Sometimes *that* is omitted when it is the subject of a clause.

91. I want to learn all [that] there is known about comets.

(See sentences 95-101 below.)

5. Practical applications of constructions of *that*. Wrong constructions of *that* are frequent in school writing. They are embarrassing proofs of ignorance.

There are two prevailing types of error made with *that*. (1) A personal pronoun is supplied which destroys the syntax: "She told us about a Japanese dagger that you couldn't pull *it* from its scabbard unless you touched a secret spring." Merely omitting *it* will restore the syntax. (2) *That* is left floating without any construction: "She told us about a Japanese dagger that in the hilt there was a secret spring." Rectifying such sentences by using some other construction of *that* is often difficult and may prove impossible. A clause with *which* may be the only solution ("a dagger in the hilt of which there was"), and even this may be cumbersome. O. Henry once manufactured, for a humorous purpose, a clause that illustrates the difficulties: "Here is a story *that* we offer $10,000 to any man who guesses the mystery." A typical example from school composition is this: "That's the tree *that* we never knew what species it was."

Brief, close-fitting parenthetical clauses may obscure the construction of *that*.

92. Foster showed us an old well that *he said* was dug by his great-grandfather.

That appears to be the object of *said,* but "he said" is a mere interjected remark that might be set off by commas or parentheses. When we remove "he said," we see that *that* is the subject of *was dug*. This sort of parenthetical clause is common; it produces errors in the use of *who*. (See page 327.)

That is often omitted, especially when it is an object. Pupils who do not understand the omission have no conception of what their verbs are doing.

93. Sidney said it was the funniest story [that] he had ever heard.
94. The poem lays claim to a religious seriousness [that] it does not possess.

Omission of a subject *that* is far less common, but by no means rare.

95. Take all (....) there is.
96. Whose house is that (....) stands on the hill?
97. There's something (....) tells me which to choose.
98. 'Tis distance (....) lends enchantment to the view.
99. He told me that there was a man below (....) desired to speak with me.
100. There is no saying (....) shocks me so much.
101. It is perhaps poverty of mind and language (....) obliges me to say that . . .

Pupils may well be advised to place *that* clauses near the antecedent; many ambiguous sentences can thus be avoided. But literature has never observed such a rule. A *that* clause may properly be far from its antecedent if there is no intervening word that causes confusion.

102. When Americans remember the sort of *stuff* about Japanese naval bases in Lower California and Japanese designs on Hawaii *that* was being printed a while ago, they are likely to dismiss the present war scare.

Some grammars teach that non-restrictive clauses are not made with *that*. The fact is that authors have made them ever since Chaucer's time, and are still making them. The matter is of no significance for school composition except in one slight way: teachers who assume that a non-restrictive *that* is erroneous are wasting time. A discussion of non-restrictive *that* is given at the end of this chapter, page 231.

6. The constructions of *which*. *Which* differs from *that* in three ways: (1) It cannot refer to persons. Pupils are prone to speak of "the clerk which sold it to me" or "the brave fireman which was risking his life." Even scrupulous editorial writers for the New York *Times* have spoken of

"two thousand officers which" and "the only leader which." (2) *Which* is often more stiff and bookish than *that.* When pupils are doing exercises with relatives or are translating from a foreign language, the artificial atmosphere always induces "which" instead of the natural and human *that.* (3) *Which* is more independent than *that:* it is more often used for non-restrictive clauses; it may refer to a whole statement; it may be used absolutely; it is sometimes used by authors as the subject of an independent sentence.

An example of *which* that refers to a whole statement is this:

103. Not many of them came, *which* was well, for the office was not large.

This use is frowned upon by some rhetoricians, and is called improper by some textbooks; but the dictionaries prove that it has been sanctioned by authors all through the centuries. Pupils, however, have never added to the merit of their composition by this sort of *which* clause.

An example of the absolute use is in the next sentence.

104. Polishing the silver was the next task; *which done,* they proceeded to scouring the shelves.

Such an absolute is archaic and stilted.

Most English authors (Dr. Johnson is one notable exception) have occasionally used *which* clauses as sentences. Addison wrote two of them in successive paragraphs of the *Spectator,* number 269. The first one is as follows:

105. Our salutations were very hearty on both sides, consisting of many shakes of the hand, and several affectionate looks which we cast upon one another. *After which* the knight told me my good friend his chaplain was very well, and much at my service.

A *which* sentence is not wrong in literature, but is an almost certain proof of ignorance in school composition. Good teaching policy requires that relative clauses shall not be tolerated as sentences unless a pupil secures permission to use them.

The blunder that ignorant pupils most often make with *which* is to repeat the preposition that governs it: *"in* which the different sizes of nails are all neatly sorted *in."* The blunder may be amplified by providing a second object for the repeated preposition: *"of* which the two girls, as they stared at their escorts, were unpleasantly aware *of it."*

Which may be used with a noun, as a sort of relative adjective.

106. About half past eleven we reached Julesburg, at *which place* we said good-by to the people who were bound for Denver.

It is doubtful whether any pupil ever produced a pleasant effect by this use of an adjective *which.* Any such expression as "by which means, of which fact, through which door" is suitable only for a legal document. In a clause like "which city is utterly uninteresting" *city* is not an appositive; it is the subject in the relative clause and is modified by *which.*

The constructions of *which* are just like those of *that,* and need no added comment here.

Whose is used as a possessive of *which.* This possessive was considered inelegant in the nineteenth century, and the older grammars called it bad English; but it is now universally conceded to be proper. For example, the *Century Dictionary* speaks of "the possessive *its,* whose place was filled by the neuter."

Whichever is discussed with the other "ever" compounds on page 225.

7. **The constructions of *who*.** *Who* is primarily the relative that refers to persons, but may be used for intelligent animals, for countries, or for anything that is somewhat personified, so that it might be spoken of as "he" or "she."

The objective *whom* is logically necessary when the pronoun is the object of a verb or a preposition.

107. Here, at last, was someone *whom* we could trust.
108. She was a girl *whom* I had never felt any interest in.

Is the objective form a necessity when the pronoun precedes the verb or the preposition? Jespersen assures us that "the natural instinct has for centuries tended to use the form *who* everywhere"; but if there is such an instinct at work, its success is not yet recorded. The grammarians still judge unanimously that *whom* must be used in a relative clause if it is the object of a verb or a preposition that follows it. (But the form of the interrogative *who* is, curiously enough, judged very differently; see section E of this chapter, page 226.)

The nominative *who* is logically necessary when the pronoun is a subject. If a parenthetical clause like *I thought* or *we supposed* is between the pronoun and its verb, the pronoun may seem to be the object of the parenthetical verb, and so may be attracted into an objective form, thus: "I hailed a driver *whom* I thought looked more dependable." But the pronoun is not the object of *thought,* for *I thought* is a mere parenthesis; the pronoun is the subject of *looked.* Therefore the logically correct sentence is:

109. I hailed a driver *who* I thought looked more dependable.

Jespersen has argued seriously and at length that "children *whom* we think are hungry" is correct. "The primary *whom,*" he says, "is put in the accusative because the nexus is dependent." Some reasoners about syntax have conceded that the argument is valid. But Fowler assumes that "no grammarian would have a word to say" in favor of such a *whom.* Certainly no American textbooks have advised pupils to use "whom we think are." Usage may be moving toward this peculiar *whom,* and we need not try to hinder its progress; but we should beware of welcoming it before it has arrived. One reason why the *whom* may never be accepted is that it can be defended only when the clause between the relative and the verb is closely restrictive. If this clause is set off by commas ("children whom, we guess, are hungry") the objective form becomes absurd. Is it likely that *whom* will be justified with a restrictive clause so long as it is considered improper with a non-restrictive clause?

Notice that in the following sentence *whom* is the object of *thought* (or is the "subject of the infinitive"):

110. I hailed a driver *whom* I thought to be more dependable.

Who is sometimes used (but mostly in archaic style) without an antecedent.

111. Who touches a hair of yon gray head dies like a dog.

It is possible (and some teachers think preferable) to explain such a clause as a noun clause that is the subject of the verb. More usually it is explained as the modifier of an understood antecedent—"he who touches"—and the understood antecedent is called the subject of *dies*. One explanation is as logical as the other. But before a teacher adopts the explanation that the clause is noun-like, he should consider the commonness of the parallel sentences in which the clause is adjectival.

112. He *who touches pitch* shall be defiled.

It is an inconsistency to say that a *who* clause is adjectival if an antecedent is expressed, but a noun clause if the antecedent is omitted. A good test can be made with this sentence from *Macbeth:*

113. *Who was the thane* lives yet.

Does it really sound as if the clause were the subject of lives? If it is called a noun clause, how shall we preserve children from confusion if we say that it is converted into an adjective clause when the naturally understood antecedent *he* is supplied?

8. The constructions of *what*. *What* never has an antecedent. Since it is so different a word from the true relatives, a teacher does well to keep it apart from them.

It was once universal custom to treat *what* as a word that contains within itself an antecedent and a relative—that is, it was said to be equivalent to *that which*. This process of converting a word into something else before parsing it is of doubtful value and has lately been declining in popularity. Modern practice prefers to train pupils to take hold of words just as they are and give an account of their constructions

without first inventing a fable that tells of non-existent words. *What,* unless it is transformed into *that which,* forms noun clauses. These are treated on page 347.

A *what* clause may be the subject of a singular verb that has a plural predicate noun.

114. What makes me suspicious is the constant *changes* that have been introduced.

Since the principal idea in the sentence is the plural *changes,* a writer may naturally be influenced by this plural and may feel that he ought to say, "What makes me suspicious *are* the changes." Authors sometimes do reason so, as appears in sentences like this: "What he is concerned with *are* the areas and sizes." An author may reason that *are* would be required if the sentence were transposed: "The changes *are* what make me suspicious." The reasoning is wide of the mark. It may be tested by applying it to "The cause of my suspicion *is* the changes." Since the subject is singular, the verb must be singular. If *changes* is made the subject in a transposed form, the verb must be plural: "The changes *are* the cause." The number of the verb should always be determined by the number of the subject. If a *what* clause is the subject, the verb should normally be singular.

Another source of confusion in reasoning about verbs used with *what* is the fact that *what* may be plural. This fact is not mentioned in most grammars. It is revealed in sentences like the following:

115. It is not demonstrably impossible that what *exist* inside the atom are colonies of very small fairies. (A. O. Lovejoy)

116. What *do* weigh with them are profounder things. (Norman Angell)

The fact that *what* may be plural should always be kept in mind when reasoning about the number of a verb in a *what* clause.

Nearly always the structure of a sentence will be revealed by keeping the foregoing facts in mind. But sentence 116

shows a question that makes the most grammatical brain reel: If the *what* clause is the subject of the verb, why should the verb be *are?* The fact is that the *what* clause is felt to be just as the older grammars explained it: "Those things which do weigh with them are." The plural of this "concealed antecedent" is what induces, irresistibly, the plural verb *are.* Such sentences are rare. Almost always the proper structure of a sentence can be more easily determined by thinking of a *what* clause as a noun clause.

The constructions of *what* within its clause are similar to the constructions of other relatives:

SUBJECT: what counts most is
PREDICATE NOMINATIVE: what this really is
OBJECT: what he most enjoyed
OBJECTIVE PREDICATE: what his environment made him
RETAINED OBJECT: what he was paid

What often seems appositive, as in this sentence: "A true tornado—what is often called a cyclone—rotates from right to left." But *what* has a construction within its clause; the clause is in apposition.

What, like *which,* is often applied to nouns in an adjectival way, especially for asking questions: "What article are you referring to?"

What was formerly used adverbially in questions, meaning "in what way?" This use survives in an obscure idiom where it is combined with *with: "What with* the ringing of telephones and the scurrying of errand-boys, I was in a turmoil."

For the constructions of *what* clauses see pages 348-356.

9. The constructions of the *ever* pronouns. *Whichever, whoever,* and *whatever* are called "indefinite relatives," because they refer to no definite person or thing.

Whoever may be said to form noun clauses.

117. *Whoever crosses the line* will be shot.

But such a clause can also be explained as an adjective clause modifying an understood antecedent, usually *he.*

Whichever, in the same way, may be said to form noun clauses.

118. I will take *whichever you say.*

Since any antecedent that is supplied would be artificial, the noun-clause explanation is more acceptable.

Whichever is often an adjective: "*whichever one* you say, *whichever stone* sparkled most."

Whatever is like *what:* it does not refer to an antecedent, but forms noun clauses. It also is frequently an adjective: "*whatever excuse* he offers." It is often used as a kind of adverb to make *no* or *none* more emphatic: "I will give him *no* help *whatever.* There is *none whatever.*"

The three "ever" pronouns may form adverb clauses, which are described on page 361.

E. The Constructions of Interrogative Pronouns

There are two kinds of questions formed with interrogatives. In the first the interrogative is the subject of the verb.

Who can stop you?
Which is better?
What has been wrong?

In the second kind of question the interrogative pronoun is not the subject; the subject is found by putting the question into the form of a statement.

Who are you?=You are *who* (predicate nominative).
Which is the right one?=The right one is *which* (predicate nominative).
Which of them did he select?=He did select *which* of them (object of the verb).
What are the plumbers looking for?=The plumbers are looking for *what* (object of the preposition).
Whom do you mean?=You do mean *whom* (object of verb).

When an interrogative *who* is an object of a verb or a preposition that follows it, the universal custom of careless speech is to use a nominative form: "*Who* do you mean? *Who* are you looking for?" So prevalent is this nominative

that it is common even in the speech of cultivated people who fear to seem pedantic. Fowler, who does not defend *who* for dignified writing, makes this admission about the spoken language:

> The interrogative *who* is often used in talk where grammar demands *whom,* as in *Who did you hear that from?* No further defense than "Colloquial" is needed for this.

Krapp *(Comprehensive Guide to Good English)* says that "Who do you mean?" is in such general use that it "has acquired good standing as a permissible colloquialism." Most grammarians make a similar comment, and they are corroborated by the findings reported in Leonard's *Current English Usage.* What, then, in view of all this evidence, is a teacher's duty? His own taste and conscience must decide. But it would seem that every teacher ought to go at least as far as this: Pupils should not be left ignorant of the fact that *whom* is still demanded in all formally correct discourse.

The explanation of how to find the subjects of sentences made with an interrogative pronoun is curiously involved. Fortunately this bit of grammar has slight importance, and should never be allowed to take the time or rouse the fears of a class. But the teacher who is unaware of the difficulty that lurks in this innocent-looking topic will one day find himself coming to grief in a recitation. The trouble is that the "Who or what?" question cannot be relied on. Apply it to this sentence: "Who is he?" The answer "Who is" sounds as convincing as the answer "He is." To prove that *he* is the subject is practically impossible without appealing to very subtle reasons. When we deal with sentences of the type of "Who is he?" we find the right answer by turning them into the form of a statement. The *who* corresponds to the noun that would be used in the answer:

{He is *who.*
{He is a famous movie *actor.*

The possessive *whose* may be used with a noun to ask a question.

119. Whose rubbers are these?

Which and *what* are used as adjectives to ask questions; see page 237.

Discussion of the "It" in "It Is I"

The *it* which vaguely refers to persons and introduces a pronoun or a noun that names the real person could be called expletive; but if *it* were so called, it would plunge us into chaos when we reason about "it is I, it is they," etc. If *it* were expletive, then the pronoun after the verb would be the real subject, and the verb would have to agree with it: "it am I, it are they." Clearly the subject is *it,* and the pronoun after the verb is a predicate nominative—just as every grammar asserts. Hence, unless we defy all grammars, we are not at liberty to call the *it* expletive.

Are we at liberty to call the *it* impersonal? Good logic can be used in favor of this explanation; we ought to adopt it if it will simplify the scheme of syntax. But two weighty objections lie against the explanation: (1) it opposes the definition that all grammars give of "impersonal"; (2) it leads to contradiction when we apply it to an analysis of the relative clauses in such sentences as "It is not she that causes the trouble."

No reasoner ought to argue that the *it* "must be" or "cannot possibly be" impersonal or expletive. It would be possible to imagine either explanation. Our only concern is to discover what explanation will fit most consistently into an entire system of syntax. Since there are such formidable difficulties in the way of calling the *it* either impersonal or expletive, we should inquire what difficulties there are in the way of calling the *it* "an indefinite personal." We find that no grammarian has objected to this. We find that it fits neatly into all our other explanations of the uses of *it,* of subjects, of predicate nominatives, of clauses that modify predicate nominatives. We find that the *it* always expresses some such meaning as "the person, the ones, the thing," etc. It announces that some person or persons, some thing or things, will soon be mentioned definitely. The indefinite *it* may

refer to either a singular or a plural, as its cousin, the French *ce,* does.

If any teacher finds some other explanation more consistent with some other scheme of syntax, he should by all means use it. If a teacher has not developed a scheme of his own, and wants to adopt some long-tested explanation until he can arrive at a better one, he may be assured that "indefinite personal" has stood the wear and tear of many years of exacting classroom application.

Discussion of Relative Clauses That Have "It" for an Antecedent

Anyone can discover whether the following discussion will be of interest to him by asking himself one question about the following sentence: "It is I that *is* at fault." What is the antecedent of *that?* If *I* is the antecedent, the clause should be "that *am* at fault." If anyone does not readily understand why *I* may not be the antecedent of *that,* he will gain information.

The information will not be important. Knowledge of this extraordinary idiom will not help a writer and should not be thrust upon pupils. A teacher may have a long and triumphant career without understanding the *that* clause. This description is recorded merely to satisfy the curiosity of those who have felt perplexed about a construction which all but defies analysis.

The best approach is made by starting with a sentence that does not contain *it.*

1. The man that did this was not Dodson.

Here the unmistakable antecedent of *that* is *man.* Now shift the order of the words.

2. The man was not Dodson that did this.

In this clumsy order the sense is the same. Although *that* stands next to *Dodson,* its antecedent is certainly not *Dodson.* We should destroy the meaning of the sentence if we called *Dodson* the antecedent, since the *that* clause applies to *man* and cannot apply to *Dodson.* The sentence still speaks of "the man that did this."

Now put *it* in place of *the man.*

3. It was not Dodson *that did this.*

The meaning of the sentence remains the same. The *that* clause does not modify *Dodson,* but modifies some unnamed person

who "was not Dodson." The sentence still means "It (the man that did this) was not Dodson."

Even without the *not* the structure of the sentence remains the same.

{The man that did this was Dodson.
{It that did this was Dodson.
{It was Dodson that did this.

Now we can see the similar explanation of the sentence with which we started.

{The one that is at fault is I.
{It that is at fault is I.
{It is I that is at fault.

The verb agrees with the subject *it,* just as it does in "it is I, it is you, it is we, it is they."

Some persons, when they have proceeded through such a demonstration, draw two conclusions: (1) that *it* must be the antecedent of the clause, (2) that the verb in the clause must agree with *it.* The canny teacher does not accept either conclusion, but reasons quite differently: (1) If we do call *it* the antecedent, we have a simple and uniform scheme of classifying such clauses; we do not affirm that *it* "must be" the antecedent. (2) The logic of our scheme does not prove what the "correct" verb in the clause is, for correctness is determined by usage. It is doubtful whether any living author could bring himself to write "It is I that is." In this and similar sentences the predicate pronoun is dominant as the subject of thought, and authors, accordingly, are likely to make the clause refer to the pronoun: "It is I that am, it is you that are." Their clauses are correct by a higher logic than that of a mechanism of syntax.

In the vast majority of sentences of this type the predicate pronoun or noun has the same person and number as *it,* and the clause would therefore have the same verb without regard to what was considered to be the antecedent. Sentences in which a *that* clause refers to *it* are very numerous in literature and are very inadequately explained in grammars. For this reason another series of illustrations may be in order.

4. Who was it that broke the window?

It means "that person who" and is the antecedent of *that.* The same explanation is clear when the sentence is put into a declarative form.

5. I'll tell you who *it* was that broke the window.

But the explanation is not so obvious in the next sentence.

6. It was not work that the tramp asked for.

Work looks like the antecedent of *that.* Yet the whole meaning of the sentence is that *work* is not the antecedent. The sentence means: "That [whatever it was] that the tramp asked for was not work." The antecedent of *that* is the indefinite *it,* which refers to something unknown—perhaps food, perhaps money, perhaps a place to sleep. At all events, we are emphatically told that *work* is not the word which *that* refers to. In other similar negative sentences the meaning would be denied if we should call the noun the antecedent of *that.*

7. It is not sulphuric acid that I want, but hydrochloric.
8. It was not Bertrand that I called on.

In sentences without *not* the same analysis is forced on us.

9. It is a wise father that is a crony to his son.

The sentence is not speaking of "a wise father that is," but asserts that "a person who is a crony to his son is a wise father."

The most common pronoun in clauses referring to *it* is *that,* but *who* and *which* are also used.

10. It is not my parents who object.

A demonstrative pronoun may be used as the antecedent of the relative clause.

11. Was that your father who just passed us?

Discussion of Non-restrictive "That"

An interesting doctoral dissertation could be written on this subject, and ought to be written; for it would be useful. A student who undertook the task would have to begin by informing himself about the history of punctuating relative clauses. He would find that in the 18th century relative clauses were often set off without reference to whether they were non-restrictive in

meaning, and that this continued to be true of some printed matter till far into the 19th century. Hence he would learn that safe data must be later than 1850. Also he would learn that these later data are worthless unless they are taken from a book which shows that care was used by the publisher to distinguish between restrictive and non-restrictive clauses.

When he had completed this preparation for his investigation, he would examine the grammars and the various books of reference to find out what the judgments of authorities have been. In Jespersen's *Philosophy of Grammar* (page 112) he would come upon this unequivocal statement, which he might quote as the text of his thesis: "The distinction between the two kinds of adjuncts [i. e., restrictive and non-restrictive] is important with regard to relative clauses. In English, while the pronouns *who* and *which* may be found in both, only restrictive clauses can be introduced by *that*." The student would then plan a search through literature that should confirm or disprove this dictum.

He might begin with the Temple edition of Shakespeare's sonnets, in which the punctuation is scrupulously made to show the meanings of clauses. In the 154 sonnets there are nine non-restrictive *thats* (numbers 24, 25, 28, 69, 78, 116, 142, 146, 148). In the 146th sonnet there is an indication of why non-restrictive *that* is more frequent in older English. It was once possible to use *that* for referring to proper nouns—thus:

So shalt thou feed on Death, that feeds on men.

There are other limitations to the use of non-restrictive *that* in modern prose: it cannot refer to a whole sentence, nor to a quantity; it likely to be clumsy in a prepositional phrase.

The following quotations illustrate what the student would find during the first twenty hours of his investigation, while he turned at random through some periodicals and books. In *Harper's* for May, 1916, he would see this line of poetry:

When I was lonely (that am so no more).

And in the *Independent* for June 5 of the same year he would find another *that* clause in parentheses:

The Chicago *Tribune* (that does not disguise its lust for a second rape of Mexico).

In W. L. Phelps's *Browning,* page 266, he would discover this sentence:

They were a disagreeable and dangerous barrier, that must be crossed before he could reach the object of his journey.

And in H. E. Fosdick's *The Meaning of Faith,* page 5, he would come upon a similar *that* clause:

When . . . one thinks of weak personalities, that ravel out at the first strain, he sees that the difference lies in courage.

On page 41 of Damon Runyon's *Rhymes of the Firing Line* is a similar clause:

Each face marked deep by the Service Stripes, that an hour of trouble brought.

Anyone who wishes to find two non-restrictive *that* clauses for himself may look through the eight stanzas of Browning's "Cristina."

Kipling's "Wireless" (in which a majority of the *which* clauses are restrictive) contains two non-restrictive *that* clauses.

Our electric lights . . . flung inward three monstrous daubs of red, blue, and green, that broke into kaleidoscopic lights on the facetted knobs of the drug-drawers.

For an instant, that was half an eternity, the shop spun before me in a rainbow-tinted whirl.

In the first hundred pages of *Treasure Island* (an edition in 290 pages) there are four non-restrictive *thats,* on pages 24, 25, 60, and 64.

He wore a huge old tattered sea-cloak with a hood, that made him appear positively deformed.

And he gave it, as he spoke, a wrench, that made me cry out.

I saw the most wonderful figureheads, that had all been far over the ocean.

Silver added to me in a confidential whisper, that was very flattering, as I thought: "He's quite an honest man."

De Kruif puts a *that* clause between dashes on page 53 of *Microbe Hunters.*

Then with a clean hair-fine tube he put a drop of pure distilled water—that had not a single little animal in it—on the same glass.

A very interesting example is furnished by Alfred Noyes in *Drake.* He favors restrictive clauses so much that he modifies

proper nouns with them in amazing ways: "Of Spain whose might was paramount, from Walsingham who bade, Our Queen Elizabeth who waits." Yet even this poet uses a non-restrictive *that* on page 26.

> And all that night he lay and heard
> Mysterious thunderings of eternal tides
> Moaning out of a cold and houseless gloom
> Beyond the world, that made it seem most sweet
> To slumber in a little four-walled inn
> Immune from all that vastness.

The student's thesis would have to conclude that non-restrictive *that* is neither archaic nor careless nor even peculiar. It is normal. Though it is uncommon, it is not rare.

CHAPTER 19

THE CONSTRUCTIONS OF ADJECTIVES

The classes and forms of adjectives are given on page 405. This chapter is devoted to the uses.

A. The Recognition of Adjectives

Adjectives are in themselves a slight and barren subject, but are important because they are the beginning of the approach to all modifying elements—the verbals, phrases, and clauses. If pupils can foresee something of the progress that lies ahead, they will work with pleasure.

Adjectives modify nouns or noun-like words or groups of words. "Modify" means literally to change the meaning of. If we speak of "houses," we convey only a very vague meaning, but if we speak of "these three yellow Italian houses," we change the vagueness to definiteness in four ways: by pointing out the houses, by giving the number, by telling the color, by saying what country they are in. If we use "which house," we have modified the noun by referring it to something previously mentioned or by asking for information about it. Even words like *each, any, a, the* add something to the meaning of a noun or pronoun.

The explanation of what *modify* means need not be stressed, for the definition is often not literally true. In school use, when we say that a word modifies, we are usually thinking of what it belongs with; and that is the ordinary meaning in practical work. If we are asking about the modifiers in "The water now turned green," we want to know whether *now* belongs with *water* or *turned,* whether *green* belongs with *turned* or *water.* We might argue that *green* adds to the meaning of the verb, and so should not get anywhere grammatically; but when we learn that, as a matter of syntax, *green*

belongs with *water,* showing what color it became, we gain knowledge.

A class should begin its acquaintance with adjectives by meeting a number of the lively descriptive kind, by seeing them at work, by growing used to thinking of each one that "It modifies a noun." No sympathetic teacher will begin operations by discoursing on the abstract functions of modifying or by dilating on the list of the kinds of modification. He will display unmistakable and active adjectives.

1. Roger—a timid, slender boy, about seventeen years old—sat on the slippery rock and watched the angry waves come higher and higher.

The teacher will ask questions and comment on replies: "Who was timid? Yes, Roger was timid. But in the sentence, as a matter of grammar, what noun does *timid* belong with? He was a timid boy. *Timid* modifies *boy.* What other word modifies *boy?* We say that *timid* and *slender* are adjectives and that they modify the noun *boy.* What is the next noun beyond *boy?* Does any word modify *years?* Yes—so *seventeen* is an adjective, telling how many. What do you say about *old?* Why, the years weren't old, were they? Who or what was old? Certainly, *old* modifies *boy.* What is the next noun? What kind of rock was it? Now tell me what the word *slippery* does in the sentence. Tell me about *angry.* Do you see any other adjectives in the sentence? Of course the waves were higher. You might say 'higher waves' or 'the waves were higher.' Then *higher* would be an adjective. If you said 'the waves grew higher,' *higher* would be an adjective. Maybe *higher* is an adjective in this sentence. It would be good headwork if you reasoned that *higher* is an adjective describing *waves.* Or if Roy said that *higher* belongs with the verb, he would be thinking well. Sometimes one answer in grammar is just as sensible as another. What always counts is to give a sensible reason."

A sensible reason in grammar is always based on what a word does. In "we climbed higher" *higher* modifies the verb, and so is not an adjective. In "we climbed to a higher place" *higher* modifies a noun and is an adjective. In "the corn grew higher" the meaning is, not that the corn grew in a higher way, but that it became higher; *higher* is a predicate adjective. (See page 240.) So in "the waves came higher" we could say that *higher* is a predicate adjective; but probably it is an adverb, as in "the waves dashed high."

There is no estimating the harm that may be done in a grammar class by a teacher who imagines that there is never more than one right answer to a question about the construction of a modifying word, and that the business of grammar is to find that one right answer. The business of grammar is utterly different. It is to find a good reason for judging one way or the other.

There is no estimating the good that may be done for pupils' intellects by a teacher who praises good reasoning and who leads pupils to see that one answer may be as valid as another. A sensible answer is important, but the way of reaching it is the first consideration.

The only good way of reaching an answer about adjectives is to show how they modify a noun-like word. One class of adjectives is hard for some pupils to reason about—the words that are commonly used as pronouns. Pupils want to think that *which* "is" a pronoun. They must learn that if *which* or *what* modifies a noun it is an adjective.

2. I am not sure *which* house he lives in.
3. There was no way of telling *what* tools might be needed.
4. *Which* one will last longer?
5. *What* reason can you give?
6. *What* a monster it is!

In direct and indirect questions *which* and *what* are interrogative adjectives. (And *whose* should be so called if possessive pronouns are called adjectives.)

The demonstrative and indefinite pronouns become adjectives if they modify nouns: *"that* scratch, *both* eggs, *some* repairs." In "each has a share" *each* is used like a noun and is a pronoun, the subject of a verb. But in "each one has a share," *each* modifies the pronoun *one* and is an adjective.

This distinction is difficult for some pupils to grasp. They feel that the word *each* ought to be, in and by itself, one part of speech; they feel that it is an adjective and that it is only masquerading as a pronoun when it appears alone. Most pupils have a strong preference for supplying words; they like to say that *each* modifies an understood *one* or *person.* We must sympathize with this way of thinking, for several reasons: it is logical; teachers in lower grades may have encouraged it; it is often necessary to supply omitted words before constructions can be explained, as appears in Chapter 24, which describes ellipses. But in general the successful policy is to discourage the understanding of words. Pupils gain a truer knowledge of sentence structure if they supply words only as a last resort. Whenever it is possible to take words at their face value as they stand in a sentence, we should do so. If, for example, an author speaks of "the brave" or "the dead" we had better not reason that these are adjectives used like nouns. Modern practice in teaching grammar is to reason that if a word is used like a noun, it had better be called a noun.

This way of teaching is not a prejudice in favor of certain particular explanations, but is a general strategy. If pupils are taught to supply words, they are thrown into a wrong adjustment: they grow into a habit of thinking that a sentence must be built over before it can be explained. If they see "climbed higher," they are prone to say that this means "climbed to a higher place," in which *higher* is an adjective. Thus they vitiate the sentence and think about an idiom that was not in the author's mind. They get into a habit of considering that an author's words are of no significance, and that the business of grammar is to work with whatever fancies

a pupil chooses to obtrude into those words. This attitude of mind perverts good study.

Suppose that a pupil comes upon "a Wyoming ranch." He may want to argue that this is wrong because one noun cannot modify another noun, or he may choose to say that *Wyoming* is a noun used like an adjective. He should learn the fact that in the English language nouns are applied to other nouns; he should learn the wisdom of saying that in this sentence *Wyoming* does the work of an adjective and can well be called an adjective. How we reason about this particular word is of no moment. What signifies is to adopt the general conception that a detached word is not any part of speech, that we cannot tell what part of speech it is until we see it in a sentence. An amusing and enlightening illustration for a class is *up*. In one sentence it may be an adverb, in another a preposition, in another a noun (the *ups* and downs), in another a verb ("He *upped* his gun and fired"), and in many expressions it seems to be an adjective: "What are you *up* to? He is *up* with the times."

So long as there is in any pupil's mind a remnant of the feeling that a detached word is, by itself, a part of speech, his ideas of grammar are befogged. Progress will not be plain, and the way will not be easy, until he is persuaded that no solitary word is an adjective, that any word is an adjective when it is used to modify a noun-like word.

Possessive pronouns can logically be called adjectives, but probably had better not be so called. (See page 208.)

Participles are used like adjectives. They could properly be called adjectives, but the scheme of grammar is easier and simpler for pupils if these verb-like modifiers have a name of their own. There are, however, many participles that are so commonly used without any thought of the verbs from which they are formed that no objection need be made to calling them adjectives: *charming, disgusting, refined, conceited.*

A pupil may have a strong feeling that a word ending in *ly*

must be an adverb because of its form; but if he is asked to put the following words into sentences, he will inevitably use them as adjectives: *lonely, homely, beastly, silly, heavenly, holy* —and a host of others. *Likely* is practically always a predicate adjective in high-school use: "he is *likely;* it isn't *likely.*"

A very common adjective, likely to be overlooked, is *no: "no* means, *no* fun, *no* other way." An adjective that expresses the opposite meaning is *all: "all* men, *all* the desks."

The adjective *many* is used to modify singular nouns, with *a* or *an: "many a* wild animal, *many an* invalid."

Quite looks like an adjective in "quite a distance" and may be so called. (But the dictionaries list it as only an adverb.)

B. The Four Positions in Which an Adjective Modifies

The most usual position of adjectives is before the modified word, called the "attributive" position: "a long, dreary, monotonous march."

The second position is in the predicate modifying the subject: "This news was *incredible;* the problem seems *easy;* it felt *clammy;* it tasted *sour;* it smelt *good.*" Predicate adjectives occur after many verbs: "turn *brown,* sounds *ominous,* lie *prostrate,* looked *dubious,* run *wild,* sat *silent,* stood *empty,* continued *quiet,* keep *still,* stayed or remained *poor,* fell *due,* got *angry,* grow *serious,* wax *eloquent,* emerge *victorious,* rise *triumphant,* prove *untrustworthy.*" Predicate adjectives are frequent after *go* ("go *free,* go *mad,* go *socialist*"); also in many slang expressions ("go rural, go haywire, go educational").

Usually the difference between a predicate adjective and an adverb is clear. If the modifying word describes the subject, it should be an adjective: "The melon looks *ripe*" (as if it were a ripe melon). If the word describes the way the action was performed, it should be an adverb: "The squirrel looked *quickly* into the box." But sometimes the line between predicate adjectives and adverbs is difficult, and may be impossible, to draw. In "run short of" we might naturally call *short* an

adjective, but in "run out of" we feel *out* as an adverb. (See the discussion of "feel badly," page 246.)

Just as predicate nouns may be placed before the verb in an inverted sentence, so predicate adjectives may come before the verb: "Very *slender,* and *frail* are these young stems."

The third position of adjectives is after an object as an objective predicate to modify an object.

7. The accusation made me *furious.*
8. We found the problem very *hard.*
9. Don't fill the pitcher *full.*
10. We left him *alone* in his glory.

The fourth position is appositive, usually after the modified word and set off by commas or dashes.

11. Mrs. Reyborn, quite *unconscious* of her danger, was chatting with a group of children.
12. Sir Gifford was the typical squire—*heavy, hearty,* somewhat *boisterous.*
13. We found him, still wide *awake,* working chess problems.

Appositive adjectives may repeat a previous adjective for emphasis or to add something to it.

14. We have seen how strong the revolution still was in Michelet—*strong* enough to carry him through all the discouragements of the nineteenth century.
15. A great deal of sentimental rot continues to be written about American colleges—*sentimental* because whining, rot because false.

An appositive adjective may precede the modified word.

16. *Wrathful* and *heedless,* the rhinoceros charged up the bank.

C. Some Irregular Uses of Adjectives

1. The plural demonstrative with *kind* or *sort*. Since *kind* and *sort* are singular nouns, the logical demonstrative adjectives to use with them are *this* and *that: "This kind* of ballot, *that sort* of appeals." But since a plural noun following *kind* or *sort* is prominent in thought, it strongly

attracts the adjective; hence English authors have for centuries frequently written *"these kind* of things" (Swift) and *"those sort* of things" (Sheridan). The large dictionaries and grammars do not censure the plural as vulgar, but speak of it as a natural colloquialism. American educators, nevertheless, have generally condemned it; textbooks have called it incorrect; and teachers have fought it down as a disreputable idiom. There is no sign that the vigor of their fight is diminishing; neither is there any sign that educated people are decreasing their use of *these* and *those.*

2. *Less* with a plural. Usage requires that *less* should be used with a singular noun to express amount ("less money, less resistance, less wheat"), and that *fewer* should be used with plural nouns to denote number ("fewer coins, fewer obstacles"). The distinction is valid, but teachers should realize that *less* with a plural is not a vulgarism. Poutsma musters many quotations from respectable modern writers who use *less* with the plurals *signs, people, tickets, odds,* etc.

3. Illogical superlatives. A high-school graduate should know that a superlative is not logical for comparing two objects; teachers should know that many good authors have used a superlative in that way. Lowell asked of two songs, "which is the best?" Addison spoke of "the most ancient" of two chairs. Poutsma wrote of "the least natural" of two views.

It may be quite illogical to speak of "the most of any one," yet the idiom is in good standing. Saintsbury wrote: "His versification is by far the *most perfect of any* English poet." It is standard usage (however clumsy or unreasonable) to say "the most interesting of any book, the most appalling of any disaster," etc.

4. Adjectives that govern nouns. The adjective *like* can be used without any following noun to show the comparison: "as like as two peas in a pod." But American pupils nearly always put some noun or pronoun after *like:* "like a tornado, like him." In modern English *like* therefore serves as a

preposition governing the objective case. The dictionaries call it a "quasi preposition"; in school we had best call it—what it is—a preposition.

The adjective *worth* is usually followed by a noun that may be called its object: "worth nothing, worth your study, worth your while." But *worth* is not regarded as a preposition by the dictionaries. The usual explanation of the following noun is that the noun is adverbial showing the degree of value.

An understanding of these highly exceptional adjectives helps to an understanding of the way in which certain other adjectives (such as *sure* and *afraid*) govern noun clauses: "sure *that he will not,* certain *that I can.*" (See page 355.)

CHAPTER 20

THE CONSTRUCTIONS OF ADVERBS AND INTERJECTIONS

Adverbs are the most diversified part of speech. No classification can include all of them; no rules apply to all of them; no grammar has ever explained all their vagaries. This account of them will proceed from the most regular and usual kinds to the most obscure and anomalous ones.

A. The Typical Modifiers of Verbs

Adverbs most commonly show the time, place, or manner of a verb. (For examples see page 407.) Some adverbs are formed by adding *s* or *ways* or *wise* to other words: *besides, sometimes, whereabouts, afterwards, needs, nowadays, always, sideways, otherwise, lengthwise.* Several of the *s* adverbs are vulgar forms: *anywheres, nowheres.* The adverbial *nights* ("he works nights") is said to have been originally formed with the adverbial *s,* but it is not so understood by those who use it. It is thought to be a plural, like the plurals in "He worked at it many long *years;* they will last several *months.*" *Years* and *months* are proper idioms, denoting length of time; but *nights,* if used to denote what portion of the day, is not in good repute. The adverbial *ways* ("a long ways off") is not a vulgarism, for many magazine writers use it; but it is not in good standing. Adverbs are seldom formed nowadays with *s, ways,* or *wise.*

Some textbooks assert that *s* forms like *towards* and *besides* are only adverbs and should not be used as prepositions. The assertion is mere myth-making, for which there is no shadow of evidence in literary usage.

The only common suffix now used for forming adverbs is *ly: rashly, finally, weakly.* Pupils are prone to think that an *ly*

word is an adverb; hence it is good strategy not to emphasize the *ly* words as if they were typical, but to show that words like *friendly, cowardly, saintly* are adjectives. This reinforces the general policy that no word is to be regarded as any part of speech, but is to be explained only by what it does in a given sentence.

Over-emphasis on *ly* adverbs induces in pupils' minds the notion that adverbs without *ly* are vulgar—that, for example, it is ungrammatical to write, "She had to speak rather *loud,*" and that the Ancient Mariner was ignorant when he said, "For *slow* and *slow* that ship will go." This fancy that authors are wrong because they violate an imaginary rule is poisonous; it destroys all sense of what good idiom is. If a pupil is encouraged to think that *ly* adverbs are more correct or more elegant, he will infer that *right* is improper as an adverb and that "thusly" and "doubtlessly" are more noble than *thus* and *doubtless.* Harm may be done by stressing *ly* adverbs.

Most classroom work should be directed at the great fact that most adverbs—and nearly all adverbs that count in composition—modify verbs. Pupils should learn always to suspect that an adverb modifies a verb, to see first whether it is not the verb that is modified. Many idiomatic and colloquial sentences show a cluster of verb modifiers, and are therefore good exercise material. One comical and exaggerated example is "The notice was *not there then, though.*" More normal examples are:

1. Look *in there now.*
2. *Soon* it will be coming *down lower.*
3. *Sometimes* they come *up rapidly.*
4. *Then* it *gradually* leaned *over.*

The first and most important move in teaching adverbs is to distinguish them from prepositions, as explained in Chapter 9. In "Come on over" the words *on* and *over* modify the verb *come;* but in "Ride over the trail on horseback" the same words have objects, are not modifiers, but are prepositions

that form adverb phrases. There are a number of words (for example, *against, for, into, with*) that are common prepositions and that are never adverbs; but it is more often true that a word that is used as a preposition may also be used as an adverb: "to come *aboard,* to come *aboard* the steamer; to lag far *behind,* to lag *behind* us; to walk *by,* to walk *by* the house." To suggest that there are understood objects of *aboard, behind,* and *by* is to encourage pupils in wrong thinking about idioms.

Adverbs have also to be distinguished from predicate adjectives, as explained in Chapter 19. It is a common rule, and a good one, that predicate adjectives should be used after such verbs as *smell, look, taste, sound, seem, feel.* But teachers should know that authors have often preferred adverbs after these verbs: "smelt abominably" (H. G. Wells); "look charmingly" (Richardson); "tastes well" (Thackeray); "sounded most handsomely" (Cabell). Especially is an adverb common after *feel:* "feel wretchedly" (Thorndike); "feels bitterly" *(New Republic);* "felt charitably" (George Eliot); "felt badly" (C. Day). It is probable that a census of the speech habits of American professors of English would show a majority in favor of "feel badly."

A third part of speech from which adverbs have to be distinguished is conjunctions. The distinction is of great moment, not in teaching the recognition of adverbs, but in teaching what a sentence is. It is equal in importance to the distinction between independent and relative pronouns. For adverbs are independent words which may introduce an independent statement that must be separated from the following statement by a semicolon or a period. Perhaps half of the comma blunders made by high-school pupils are caused by the ignorance of the independent nature of adverbs. For example, *then* announces an independent clause and modifies the verb in the clause; it is a fundamentally different word from *while,* which links a modifying clause to the verb of a main clause.

Hence the principal usefulness of the study of adverbs is to build up in the mind of the class the conception that an adverb is an independent word. Tactics for carrying out this purpose are described in Chapter 8—inventing sentences that begin with adverbs and then writing sentences to precede these.

The adverb that most commonly causes comma blunders is *then;* others that rank high in destructive power are *there, finally, however,* and *still.* An alphabetical list that includes all trouble-makers which commonly appear in school compositions is as follows: *accordingly, also, consequently, finally, hence, here, however, indeed, later, meanwhile, moreover, nevertheless, now, otherwise, perhaps, possibly, somtimes, still, surely, then, there, therefore, thus.*

Some of these words (*indeed, perhaps,* etc.) are very vague modifiers of the verb, limiting the force of the statement. Ten of them (*consequently, moreover, still,* etc.), refer to the previous statement and show the logical connection with it; hence they are thought-connecters and could be called conjunctions in a rhetorical sense. But in syntax they are entirely different from conjunctions: they are preceded by a semicolon or a period. They are therefore classed as adverbs in the dictionaries. A discussion of them is given at the end of this chapter, page 255.

A book would be required to describe all the adverbs that modify verbs. In a one-volume grammar there is no space to treat them; teachers must rely on a dictionary. But this chapter can furnish a few comments on some puzzles and wrong theories.

1. Little words that follow the verb. Many words which are commonly prepositions may belong with verbs in a vague way, not conveying a definite meaning like real modifiers, but not having any objects as prepositions do: "pass *by,* walk *in,* finish *off,* try *on,* look *out,* rush *past,* stroll *around,* set *to.*" The most remarkable of such words is *up,* which is attached to hundreds of verbs, often as a meaningless intensive, but often

causing highly idiomatic turns of meaning; "think up, break up, eat up, call up, keep up, bring up."

When a verb is made passive, a preposition may be "retained" after it: "I had never heard *of* this; this had never been heard *of.*" *Of* could be called a sort of adverb, since it has no object; but it is regularly called a retained preposition. (See under prepositions, page 267.)

2. Old phrases. In "They cost six cents *apiece*" there is a petrified phrase; the sentence means "They cost, *for each one,* six cents. The adverb *apiece* modifies the verb. So "It is two o'clock" means "It is, *by the clock,* two (hours after twelve)." The word *o'clock* modifies the verb. *Ago* means "in time gone by." In "They left long ago" *ago* modifies the verb, and is modified by the adverb *long.* In "once in a while" the adverb *once* is modified by the phrase.

3. *So.* This word often seems like a predicative adjective. ("It may be so"—that is, true.) But it is called an adverb by the dictionaries: "I was told *so;* it might have been *so.*"

4. *Not.* This is the most common adverb, which modifies verbs by denying the statements they make. It may be printed in contractions as if it were part of the verb: "can't see, don't know." To use it with the negatives *never* and *no* is a pure vulgarism. To use it with *hardly* ("I couldn't hardly see") is neither so illogical nor so vulgar, but is decidedly bad taste. To use it with *but* is a standard literary idiom: "I *cannot but* regret" (Lounsbury); "I cannot but think" (A. Flexner).

5. *Well.* Teachers often cause confusion for themselves and the class by speaking of *well* as "an adverb." It is frequently an adjective: "Is he quite *well?* All's *well.* It is *well* to be courteous."

6. *Fine, good.* It should be remembered that *fine* has, in certain senses, an ancient and honorable history as an adverb; also that a great many educated people habitually use in free-and-easy speech such expressions as "getting on fine." To argue that *fine* is not an adverb is to defy the facts of language. All

we can sensibly argue is that the adverb *fine* is not in good use. In the same way we must realize that *good* is an adverb, used millions of times a day and entered in the dictionaries. It may yet win its way to propriety in such expressions as "going good." But it has not as yet made any appreciable progress. It remains a vulgar adverb.

7. ***Kind of, sort of.*** These curious colloquial expressions ("it was kind of awkward; she was sort of irritated") are transformations of the dignified "a kind of" and "a sort of" that are predicates to describe a subject: "He was a kind of bodyguard." They may be said to modify the preceding verb.

B. Modifiers of Adverbs and Adjectives

The adverbs that count directly for improving composition are those that modify verbs; exercise with adverbs that modify other parts of speech is directed only at a fuller understanding of the small elements of sentence structure.

Adverbs that modify adverbs and adjectives indicate the degree of a quality: "*too* much, *very* cold, a *little* below, *rather* peculiar, *somewhat* differently, *any* smaller, *quite* abruptly, *much* higher." The most common of the adverbs of degree are *more* and *most,* used to form the comparisons of adverbs and adjectives: "*more* secure, *more* gallant; *most* securely, *most* gallantly."

Almost and *nearly* are modifiers that often seem to limit what follows, as in "almost an accident, nearly what I want, almost there." But usually they are better explained as modifiers of a preceding verb, which mean "almost is, was," etc. Sometimes the force of *almost* seems unquestionably to apply to the following word: "almost all, almost over, almost out."

About is similar to *almost:* it emphasizes what follows, but can usually be said to modify a preceding verb: "There were about forty, about enough, about empty." When *about* refers to quantity ("about a quart, about a mile"), it can be explained as a preposition, but is really an adverb.

The word *all,* a kind of pronoun or adjective, is often used in an appositive way for emphasis: "They were *all* clean—that is, they, all of them, were clean. An *all* used in this way usually seems to intensify the following adjective: "It is all dirty, all wrong, all right." Hence *all* in such connections has really become an adverb, one which is extremely common: "all over, all afire, all ready, all agog, all along." In "He was all but dead" *all* can be explained as a kind of pronoun and *but* as a preposition—"He was everything except dead." But the only needed explanation is that *all but* modifies *dead.*

So, as, and *more* are adverbs which modify an adverb or an adjective and are modified by a clause that shows the degree of comparison: *"so* strong *that he could, as* weak *as a kitten (is), more* feeble *than he used to be."*

The peculiarity of *enough* is that it follows the word that it modifies: "strange enough" and "well enough" mean "sufficiently strange" and "sufficiently well."

An adverbial *that* is vulgar if followed by a clause of comparison (I was *that* astonished *that I was speechless*), but is passable idiom in a demonstrative sense: "I can't go *that* far; it hardly seems *that* high." A remnant of an old adverbial *that* is *the,* which is seen in such idioms as *"the* more I think of it, *the* less I like it."

A very involved set of idioms is formed with *have* and the adverbs *rather, lief* (or *lieve*), *better, soon:* "I had rather, had just as lieve, had better, had just as soon." Dr. Johnson registered the following guess about *had rather* in his dictionary of 1755: "This is, I think, a barbarous expression, of late intrusion into the language, for which it is better to say *will rather."* His guess, though utterly unfounded, has been influential ever since. The fact is that the dictionaries do not prefer *would rather* to *had rather.*

A freakish adverb is *every* in such locutions as "every now and then, every once in a while." The dictionaries enter *every* as only an adjective, and it feels like an adjective in "every

now and then"; but *now* and *then* are adverbs and are clearly modified by *every*. What is there to say except that *every* is an adverb?

C. Adverbs That Modify Prepositions and Conjunctions

The usual textbook definition of an adverb is that it is a word which modifies a verb, an adjective, or another adverb. The uses of adverbs that come under this definition have now been described; the rest of the chapter will be devoted to uses that lie outside the definition.

Adverbs may emphasize prepositions: "*just* in time, *ever* since June, *right* on the line, *all* over town." These could be explained as modifiers of preceding verbs, like *exactly,* or *entirely;* but they are not so felt. Adverbs may modify conjunctions: "*right* where it has always been, *simply* because he was diffident, *about* where you planted the bush, *just* when the gong sounded, *shortly* before he died."

D. Adverbs That Intensify

Only may modify a verb, meaning "merely," as in "I only pretended." Or *only* may be an obvious adjective when it means "sole," as in "an only son, the only exception." But the most common use of *only* is to throw emphasis on a word or phrase or clause: "only one thing, only this, only dimly, only to see, only wondering, only begun, only by a revolution, only in an emergency, only what was expected, only when there is need."

Almost always it is possible to explain that *only* modifies the verb, but textbooks do not so explain the word; they all convey the idea that *only* should be placed close to what it emphasizes—or, as they say, close to what it "modifies." Yet an *only* that emphasizes a noun or a pronoun is not like an adjective and is not called an adjective. All dictionaries and grammars agree in calling it an adverb. Such a subtlety should never be discussed in class. The uninformed teacher would

find the topic a quagmire; the informed teacher will step quickly over it to the firm ground of ordinary syntax.

The position of *only* is a pet subject among some rhetoricians, who insist that the word should be placed next to what it stresses. For example, they contend that "I only want to say" is slovenly, that the proper word-order is "I want only to say." There is no question that care should always be exercised in placing *only* and that it should generally be next to the word it emphasizes, but it is equally true that strict observance of the rule is sheer pedantry which leads to clumsiness.

Placing *only* before the verb ("He only came at night") is abundantly justified in literature and is by many competent critics preferred to the rather artificial "He came only at night." For instance, Whitney says in his *Grammar,* "This preposition was *only* used with the infinitive when it had a real prepositional value." Fowler says that a man who objects to "He only died a week ago" is a friend from whom the English language may well pray to be saved.

Another universal intensive adverb is *even.* It can usually be explained, like *only,* as a modifier of the verb, but its real modifying force is often directed at other words or groups: "even more noisy, even I, even the poets, even in the morning, even where no rain fell."

The position of *even* deserves some attention in school, for pupils tend to place it at the end of the sentence: "He was more playful when he was old than when he was a puppy *even.*" The *even* belongs near the beginning of the sentence, before *more.*

Whatever may be an intensive of an adverbial sort that follows the word it emphasizes: "no reason whatever, nothing whatever."

Else is another adverb that follows a pronoun or an indefinite noun or adjective and has the meaning of "besides": "no one else, something else, anybody else, nothing else, somewhere else."

E. Adverbs That Do Not Modify

It is hardly an exaggeration to say that any word which cannot be classed elsewhere is put among the adverbs. The expletive *there* ("Now there was a quorum present") is in no sense a modifier; but since it cannot be called by any other name, it is called an adverb.

Yes and *no* are not modifiers. How should they be classified? Since they belong nowhere else, they are dumped among the adverbs.

When, where, how, and *why* are called interrogative adverbs when they are used to ask questions.

There are three meaningless interjections that are used to begin conversational sentences: *"Why,* I'm not sure. *Well,* what of it? *Now,* my fourth point is this." These interjectional words are called adverbs.

F. Adverbs That Serve as Nouns and Adjectives

If we encounter "since then" or "by now" or "for ever" or "to here," are we to say that the prepositions have adverbs for their objects? We may properly say so. Probably it is better policy not to go beyond the fact that *these prepositions have objects.* Why need we philosophize about whether *then* is an adverb or is used like a noun because it is the object of a preposition? The question does not concern us. In "He has been better since then" *has been* is modified by a phrase, *since then; then* is not doing the work of an adverb, but is the object of a preposition. It is proper logic to say that *then* is a noun in this sentence—if any pupil pushes the query.

If we encounter "The people here are sociable," shall we say that the noun is modified by an adverb? We might. But why should we deny the very definition of an adverb by talking so? If *people* is a noun, a word that modifies it is, by definition, an adjective. There is no wisdom in debating what *here* "is." We can see clearly enough what it does: it explains the location of the people.

Adverbs are so commonly applied to nouns and pronouns that the fact should be familiar to teachers. The fact need not be disconcerting. If anyone yearns for an explanation, the likeliest one is that the adverbs can be said to modify an elliptical verb; in "the men below" we naturally think of "the men who are below." So of the following: "the one now uppermost, those behind, fashions then in vogue, the way out, a glance upward, the floor above." See how the noun *glow* is modified in the following sentence: "In that fierce glow *ninety-three million miles away* forces are at work of which he has but a glimmering now." *Away* belongs with *glow;* perhaps it modifies an understood *is.* But there is no need to say so, and there is some danger.

Often when *not* is applied to an adjective, we inevitably think of an elliptical clause: "curses not loud but deep, a country not his own." But we should be aware that adverbs are sometimes tacked to nouns in ways that cannot be explained by supplying words: "In epics, novels, in histories —in literature *generally.*" Authors do once in a while place an adverb directly before a noun: "my *often* trials, an *almost* reconciliation, the *then* president." These are archaic and are hardly tolerated nowadays.

G. Interjections

It is customary in grammars to describe, as a part of speech, those syllables which are "interjected" into a sentence to express emotion, and which have no syntactical connection with the sentence. The most common is *O* or *Oh.* Others are *ah, ha-ha, gee, um-hm, hey, hurrah, hello, pshaw, whoa.* Some interjections are archaic or only literary: *fie, alas, marry, zounds, heigh-ho.* Others are coined by comic writers or artists to represent outlandish sounds; *wham, wambo, bingo, blurp, blah, zoom, zickety.*

No line can be drawn between these pure interjections and the exclamatory uses of real words. Section E spoke of *well,*

why, and *now* used interjectionally. Chapter 17 described the exclamatory uses of nouns; if *woe* or *mercy* is used as a mere exclamation, it may be classed as an interjection. Any other part of speech may be written as an independent exclamation, and may then be called an interjection; but nothing is gained by classifying it so.

An exclamatory word may represent a complete sentence. For example, an exclamatory verb may be a grammatical sentence: "Fire! Beware! See!" Adverbs and adjectives and phrases may be, as the context shows unmistakably, the equivalents of sentences that have been abbreviated: "Never! (I will never agree); Steady! (Be steady); All right! (That is all right); In there! (It is in there)." For other illustrations see Ellipses, page 332. The difference between a mere interjectional word and an elliptical sentence is of no significance rhetorically, but may be important as syntax that must be shown by punctuation. For example, a character in a story may say, "Foolish! There's not a chance in the world." If the writer does not show by punctuation or a capital letter that *foolish* is the equivalent of a sentence, he writes a comma blunder. Hence a knowledge of elliptical exclamations is useful for theme-writers. If the class of interjections is extended to include such sentences, pupils are misinformed.

Discussion of the Adverbs That Are Sometimes Called Conjunctions

There are many discrepancies in the classifications made by the four large dictionaries: *International, Standard, Century,* and *Oxford. Also* is called a conjunction, but only in one obsolete meaning. *Then* and *now* are called conjunctions, but only in their argumentative meanings ("There is, then, no real difference; now what can that mean?"). *Still* is called an adverb by all four dictionaries, but the *International* adds a curious note: "Sometimes used as a conjunction." *Therefore* is called "adverb and conjunction" by the *International,* but an adverb only by the other three dictionaries. *However* and *nevertheless* are called conjunc-

tions by the three American dictionaries, but adverbs, and only adverbs, by the *Oxford*. C. T. Onions says flatly in *Advanced English Syntax:* "Words like *however* and *nevertheless* are not conjunctions at all, but adverbs." C. P. Mason, *English Grammar,* says of these words: "They are only simple adverbs, not even conjunctive adverbs." And the American dictionaries use the semicolon or period with these two words, showing that the words (however they may be classified) perform the functions of independent adverbs. That fact is what signifies in teaching pupils to know what a comma blunder is.

In 1919 the Committee on Economy of Time, of the National Council of Teachers of English, made the following recommendation: "Much time and labor can be conserved by carefully teaching the distinction between the conjunctions proper (*while, as, for, but,* etc.) and the entirely different independent adverbs (*then, there, nevertheless,* etc.); the former may be used with commas, but the latter require periods or semicolons." This advice seems to have been well received and to have been widely followed. It is corroborated by Weseen in his *Dictionary of English Grammar,* page 152, where he lists among the conjunctive adverbs *however* and *nevertheless,* and remarks: "Any one of these words should be preceded by a semicolon (not a comma), as 'it is getting late; therefore I must hurry.' "

The name "conjunctive adverb" would be useful if it had not been widely used by numberless grammarians to describe those very conjunctions from which Weseen is distinguishing the adverbs. Compare Sweet, I, 129 (1892); Ritchie, 157 (1914); Buehler, 273 (1906); G. J. Smith, 195 (1901); Kittredge and Farley, 86 (1913). The only name that will throw the distinction into relief is plain "adverb."

Whatever the conflicts of scholarly opinion may be, and however a teacher chooses to align himself with one opinion or another, the great fact of practical pedagogy remains—that pupils have to learn, somehow, the difference between a comma that makes a blunder and a period or a semicolon that makes a correct sentence. The difference depends on understanding that words like *however, still,* and *nevertheless* must not be used with commas before them. A definite and concrete aid in teaching the

difference is to say that the words are independent adverbs. Our preferences for nomenclature should not obscure this fact that the difference must be taught; if anyone finds this way of teaching unacceptable, he must devise some other way.

How hard it is to get help from technical scholarship is laughably illustrated by what the authorities have to say about *yet, so,* and *else*. Onions puts them in his list of words that are not conjunctions; but his name is stamped in gold letters on the back of a volume of the *Oxford Dictionary* in which there is half a column of quotations that illustrate *yet* as a conjunction! All the dictionaries and all literature confirm the fact that *yet* is a conjunction. *So* was not entered as a modern conjunction in any dictionary until the revised *Standard* was published in 1924; its illustration was "He gave his promise, *so* they went away." The word had been regarded as a pure adverb, like *consequently*. But it has been an indubitable conjunction in the twentieth century, flooding triumphantly into all recent literature. Schools have to fight it as a pest; one good way of fighting is to require a semicolon with it, as if it were still an adverb; but this is a technical fiction. *So* is a conjunction, everywhere dominant. *Else* is called an adverb by all the dictionaries, but has one conjunctional use. (See page 304.)

For a supplementary discussion, see page 317.

CHAPTER 21

THE CONSTRUCTIONS OF PREPOSITIONAL PHRASES

A. The Words That Serve as Prepositions

The following list includes all the prepositions that are likely to occur in exercise material. The list is followed by comments on the prepositions that are starred.

abaft	atop	failing*	on	to
aboard	before	for	onto*	toward
about	behind	from	opposite*	towards*
above	below	in	outside	under
across	beneath	inside	over	underneath
after	beside	into	past	unlike*
against	besides	like*	per*	until
along	between	minus*	plus*	unto
alongside	beyond	near*	round	up
amid	but*	next*	save*	upon
amidst	by	nigh*	since	versus*
among	despite	notwithstanding	through	via
anent	down	of	throughout	with
around	during	off	till	within
at	except			without

COMMENT ON CERTAIN PREPOSITIONS

But. Textbooks call *but* a preposition in such expressions as "no one but me," and universal school practice is to teach that the objective case is required after such a *but.* Teachers should know that this school practice is considered wrong by some critics, who make a powerful argument from literary usage to show that a nominative ought to follow such a *but.* The argument was once advanced with much spirit by an indignant contributor to the *Atlantic;* she denounced the ignorance of pedagogues who require the objective; she argued that *but* is a conjunction which should be followed by a nominative pronoun if the preceding *no one* or *everybody* or *all* is nominative; and she cited the line from *Casabianca,*

"Whence all *but he* had fled." Her reasoning was that the syntax was equivalent to "all had fled, but he had not fled." This logic is corroborated by the dictionaries and by the usage of poets, who have usually preferred "but he, but I," etc. Many prose writers have preferred the nominative. Hichens wrote, "No one but God and *I";* Newman wrote, "all but I"; the *Oxford's* comment is *"but me* is colloquial." Some authors would feel that *them* is intolerable in "Who but *them* could have dared?" Yet the objective has been used by poets; Keats wrote, "No one but *thee* hath heard." Usage now seems to favor strongly the objective pronouns. If pupils are allowed to use the nominatives, they will be thought ignorant.

Failing. This may have an ordinary participial use, modifying a noun or pronoun; or it may be used with an absolute noun; but it is a preposition in such a sentence as this: "Apply to the chairman, or, *failing* him, to some member of the Council." The *Oxford* gives *failing* a separate entry as a preposition.

Like, unlike, near, next, nigh. These are only grudgingly admitted among the prepositions by the dictionaries; they are called adjectives or adverbs "with prepositional uses." But young people nowadays can hardly use *like* in any but a prepositional way. In "near us" and "next me" what plain reason can be given for the objective forms except that they are the objects of prepositions? If *like* is a preposition, we had best say that *unlike* is a preposition in "Henry, *unlike* me, was not alarmed."

Minus* and *plus. These may be called prepositions in "twelve *minus* five, six *plus* two." Also *less,* used in the same way, could be called a preposition, but no dictionary so classifies it.

Onto. *Onto* is often a sheer blunder, is never needed, and is treated with scant respect by the dictionaries. Yet it has often appeared in literature and need not be called erroneous.

Opposite. *Opposite* is not called a preposition by dictionaries, but its use is undeniably prepositional in "sat opposite me."

Per. *Per* is used in Latin phrases and in commercial language. Its use with English nouns has been frowned on by purists, but is well established in such phrases as "per day."

Save. *Save* is somewhat archaic: "All save thee I fell with curses; not one amongst us save yourself." *Save,* like *but,* is often regarded as a conjunction that should be followed by the nominative: "anyone save he."

Towards. It is common belief that the preposition ought to be *toward,* but there is no foundation for the belief. Fowler says that "the *s* form is the prevailing one."

Versus. *Versus* is called a legal word by dictionaries, but its use in the language of sports brings it into school writing as a living preposition which young people prefer to *against.*

The list of prepositions at the beginning of the chapter does not include such bookish or unusual words as *a* (*sic*—as in "go a hunting"), *aboon, adown, afore, ahint, maugre, out, pro, sans, vice.* Yet one of these may be revived and have a vogue at any time: *adown* is in favor with some modern versifiers.

The list of prepositions could be extended by including *ing* participles which have lost their use as modifiers, which refer to no noun, and which serve as prepositions. An example of the change from participle to preposition is the word *during.* This was originally a participle of the verb *dure* (to last, to continue), and formed absolute constructions like "my life during"—that is, while my life dures—and came to be regarded as a preposition that had *life* for its object. (A parallel is "pending a decision," in which *pending* is called a preposition, but might be called a modifier of the absolute noun.) Now that the verb *dure* is obsolete, *during* remains as a pure preposition. Another example is *considering.* This participle came to be used regularly in a "dangling" way, without modifying any noun: "*considering* the circumstances [that is, if we consider, or one considers, the circumstances], he was most fortunate." In a similar way *regarding* and *concerning,* used

without reference to anyone who regarded or anything that concerned, lost their verbal force and became mere prepositions. This tendency to use participles that do not belong with any noun has always been strong and is strong today, especially in scientific and technical writing—thus: "*Coming* now to the question of nesting proclivities, there is some evidence," etc.; "*Summing* up, the balance of opinion is seen to be," etc. The writers do not indicate who is coming or who is summing, but leave the participles hanging without any word to modify. (See Dangling Participles, page 272, and Absolute Participles, page 273.) The words are still felt as participles, but could easily grow, and perhaps are now growing, into prepositions. If *coming* changes into a preposition, it will carry *to* along with it, and will be a "compound" preposition, *coming to*—like *according to*. There are many unrelated participles of a prepositional sort that range through the whole gamut of propriety, from *regarding* (which is purely prepositional) to "*Pushing* this comparison further, the period of greatest vigor is followed by maturity"—where *pushing* is a sheer blunder.

The most common and best established of the participial prepositions are these: *according to, barring, concerning, considering, depending on, excepting, following, including, owing to, pending, regarding, respecting.*

The list of prepositions could be indefinitely extended by adding the "compound" prepositions—that is the combinations of a preposition with another word or two. Such combinations as *because of, aside from, as for, as to, instead of, regardless of* (in which there is only one preposition) might be called compound prepositions; for they really act as one word, and an explanation of each one separately is a meaningless analysis. But to go further, to bunch two prepositions and a noun, and call the three words a preposition, is a dubious operation. The logic of bunching them is sound; there is no objection to doing so if a teacher prefers.

It is the effect on pupils that makes the bunching dubious. If they gather the idea that any cluster of words may be lumped together as one preposition, they lose sight of what the words are really doing. Consider "beyond the reach of poverty." It is possible to call *beyond the reach of* one compound preposition, though in fact there are two phrases, *beyond reach* and *of poverty;* the *of* phrase modifies the noun *reach.* If a teacher adopts the policy of putting two prepositions together, he must admit that the following word-groups can be compound prepositions: "through all the windows of, across every other street leading to." Perhaps he will do no harm by so teaching. He should consider the probability that pupils find it easier to deal with one preposition at a time, and gain clearer notions in that way. There are only a few pairs of prepositions so thoroughly coalesced that it is natural to call them compound: *by means of, with respect to, in spite of, in* (or *with*) *regard to, on account of.* In these groups we do not realize any definite meaning of the nouns, and hence can easily think of the three words as one connective.

The most remarkable compound preposition in the language is *due to,* which has grown up under our eyes during the twentieth century. Throughout the nineteenth century *due* was an adjective that was used as a predicate or an appositive and was followed by a *to* phrase: "The scarcity was *due* to a sudden demand; her anxiety, *due* to lack of news, was overwhelming." But even as early as the middle of the nineteenth century there were sentences which showed a lack of understanding that *due* was an adjective—for example, in *The Origin of Species,* 1859: "New places in the polity of nature do not occur until after long intervals, *due* to the occurrence of physical changes." It is hard to see how *due* modifies either *places* or *intervals;* "due to the occurrence" seems like a phrase that modifies *do occur.* In the following sentence from Chamberlin and Salisbury's *Geology*

(1906) *due to* is an unmistakable preposition: "The hind limbs were only slightly modified from the land type, perhaps *due to* the recurring necessity of visiting the shores." Not till 1907 did any textbook give warning of the new idiom; then Woolley registered it as an error. The error flourished vigorously. By 1916 *due to* had become common at the beginnings of sentences, as in this quotation from *The World's Work* of May, 1916: "*Due to* the shortage of men about half the destroyers are manned with reduced complements." An article in the *Yale Review* of January, 1918, contained two examples of *due to* in this initial position. By 1930 the new preposition had so thoroughly established itself that some college instructors under forty years of age could not comprehend the objection to it. Curme's *Syntax* said in 1931: "The preposition *due to* is not more incorrect than the preposition *owing to*."

B. The Objects of Prepositions

The function of prepositions, as explained in Chapter 9, is to attach an object to some word and form a phrase that modifies the word. The objects are usually nouns or pronouns: "at the *crossroads,* by a *brook,* like *them,* between *him* and *me*." Objects may be gerunds or infinitives: "after *taking,* without *hesitation,* except *to surrender*." The bare infinitive may be the object of *to* and then form a modifying phrase: "rooms to *rent,* nothing to *do* but *pay*." (See page 290.) The objects of prepositions may be adverbs: "till *then,* by *now,* at *once*." (See page 253.) There seem to be prepositions that have phrases for objects: "bring him for *over night*." (See section D below.) Prepositions may have clauses for objects: "judging by *what he says,* the question of *when they will be paid,* measured from *where the road forks*." (See pages 309, 352, and 353.)

Prepositions sometimes have adjectives as objects: Jespersen cites the following examples: "at six weeks *old,* to six feet

high, ranks of three files *deep*"—for it is clear that the nouns *weeks, feet,* and *files* are adverbial, modifying the adjectives.

These constructions, though not unknown in literature, are really boggled syntax and should not take the time of a class.

A preposition may come after its object: "*This* I cannot agree *to*. *Some* of the insults he took no notice *of*." This order is rare in prose for nouns or independent pronouns, but is very common with interrogative and relative pronouns: "*What* are you looking *at*? This is the one *that* I sent *for*."

Prepositions that have relatives or interrogatives for their objects and that come after the objects are often at the end of a sentence: "He confiscated all *that* he could lay his hands *on*." English literature furnishes copious proof that a preposition at the end of a sentence is natural and correct. A clumsy writer may close a sentence clumsily with a preposition, but all skilful writers can close sentences agreeably with prepositions.

A preposition may have two or more objects: "Everything was at *sixes* and *sevens*. We looked under every *pebble* and *shell* and *leaf*."

C. The Words Modified by Phrases

If the 72 prepositions in the list on page 258 are assorted according to their meanings, it will be seen that 49 of them usually denote position, that 5 of them usually denote time, that 7 of them usually denote exception, that the other 11 have diverse meanings which cannot be grouped. The great preponderance of the meanings of place and time would indicate that phrases usually modify verbs and verbals; and that is the fact. Pupils should always look first to see whether a phrase does not modify a verb or a verbal.

Certain peculiarities of phrasal modifying are commented on.

1. Modifying nouns. The usual preposition that forms modifiers of nouns is *of*. This is so common and obvious, and often so insignificant, that time may be saved by omitting it from exercises.

Phrases of place and time do sometimes modify nouns and pronouns: "the classes *in the morning,* the one *at your right,* the streets *on the north side.*" Even these could be explained as modifiers of an understood verb in a relative clause: "classes *that come* in the morning, the one *that is* at your right." But the explanation is sometimes false and usually poor policy. Pupils should be trained to regard place and time modifiers of nouns as exceptional and peculiar. Most phrases that modify nouns are formed with *of, for,* and *with.*

2. Seeming to modify adverbs. An adverb frequently intervenes between a verb and a phrase: "walked *slowly* along the path, looked *far* beyond the smoke." Unless pupils receive special caution, they assume that the phrases modify the adverbs. It is doubtful whether an adverb is ever modified by a phrase.

3. Probably modifying adjectives. But we may concede that phrases sometimes modify adjectives: "sorry for it, happy about it, curious about them, slow to anger." Even in such idioms a stricter analysis might prove that the phrases really modify a preceding verb.

4. Phrases with *all*. In "He has no manners at all" it is certain that the phrase does not modify *manners;* it may be said to modify *no,* just as *whatever* would. (See page 226.) In "burst out all at once, was all on fire," etc., the phrases modify the verb, and *all* modifies (or "intensifies") the phrases.

5. *About*. When *about* means "nearly," it sometimes looks like a preposition: "It cost *about* a dollar; it is *about* time." But in all such cases the word is really an adverb modifying the verb, just as if it were *nearly.*

D. Are Phrases Used Like Nouns?

It is common custom in grammars to define a preposition as a word that forms a modifying phrase, and then later to exhibit phrases that are used as nouns. Phrases are said by all grammars to be used sometimes as subjects: "*At noon* is

the best time; *in the evening* is when I enjoy it most; *beside the well-curb* would be a good position; *at the hostess's right* is the place of honor." Phrases often seem to be objects of prepositions: "came to *within an inch* of the record, sold for *between seven and eight* cents a dozen, crept from *under the blanket,* not allowed except *on such occasions,* no rest except *in heaven,* appointments for *after midnight.*" Phrases that look like predicate nominatives are displayed at length in some grammars: "This was *in bad taste;* he felt *in a false position;* it now seemed *beyond repair;* she was not yet *of age.*" A phrase may appear to be in apposition with another phrase: "I have a fondness for being alone—*for enjoying* my own company."

A strong argument can be made against this method of teaching that phrases may be noun-like—thus: "Since by definition a preposition forms a modifier and since there are ways of explaining all phrases as modifiers, we ought not to admit that phrases can be subjects and objects." As for the definition of a preposition, the argument is not valid; see "Definitions are not all-inclusive," page 144. As for the other ways of explaining phrases, they are partially valid. It is, for example, usually poor judgment to explain phrases as predicate nominatives; most phrases that have that appearance are really modifiers of the verb. But in rare cases, like "seemed beyond repair," the phrase does not tell where it seemed, but is really describing a subject. It is true that phrases which look like subjects can be explained as modifiers of understood words, but these words are likely to be fictions that never were in the idioms. It is true that phrases which look like objects of prepositions can be explained as modifiers formed with such compound prepositions as "to within, from between, from under"; but these prepositions are more exceptional and monstrous than noun-like phrases. There seems to be no good reason why teachers should not follow the lead of the great majority of grammars and admit that phrases may be noun-like.

E. Retained Prepositions

If such a sentence as "Everybody bowed down to her" is put into a passive form, it becomes "She was bowed down to by everybody." The preposition *to* is retained; it reminds us that it was a preposition, and it still feels like one. But it has no object. This curious construction, which is often a clumsy one, is common: "highly thought *of,* hovered *over* by angels, had not been lain *on,* being found fault *with,* was laughed *at,* had been applied *for,* was agreed *to.*"

Prepositions are also retained after infinitives and gerunds that express the use or purpose of things. If a writer is thinking of "The peers go in *at one door,*" he may say, with a descriptive infinitive, "There is one door for peers to go in *at*" (Rupert Brooke). Thoreau, while thinking of "go a-fishing in a stream," wrote that "Time is but a stream to go a-fishing *in.*" Other examples are: "a pleasant place for whiling away a few idle weeks *at,* a hat to go to a play late *in.*"

Such prepositions are said to be "retained" or "stranded." Since they have no objects, they have really lost their right to be called prepositions and are a sort of adverb.

F. Prepositions as a Part of Verbs

The fact that prepositions are retained after passive verbs makes it natural to argue that they are a real part of the verb —that, for instance, *look at, think of, find fault with,* etc., are verbs. This way of regarding verbs does not confuse scholars who know where to draw the line between *look at* and *look notwithstanding;* but it is a mystification to pupils. (See page 181.)

G. "Like" and "With"

If a teacher is making a struggle against *like* as a conjunction (a struggle which is so hard that it may be unwise), he must begin by emphasizing the preposition *like,* the word that takes a noun or a pronoun for its object. We may say

"like a deer, like lightning, like rain, like a leaf"; we must not add a verb. For the verb would form a clause. If *like* joins a clause, it is a conjunction. A good slogan for class use is "Don't use a verb after *like*." Illustrations should be made with personal pronouns: "Like him, like me, like them." We must not say "like he does," but must use the objective pronoun *him,* and must not add a verb.

Phrases formed by *with* are often such vague and unattached modifiers that they might well be called absolutes.

With girls tossing roses in his path, the Mayor returned from Madison last night.

With knowledge increasing by leaps and bounds, we have reached a time when we must be content with specialisms.

If the phrases modify anything, they modify the verbs. Pupils who use the absolute *with* are likely to construct uncouth sentences. They can sometimes be brought to see the uncouthness if a teacher rehearses the absurd modifying: "It is not strange that small boys want to be *gangsters with the newspapers* describing so many crimes."

CHAPTER 22

THE CONSTRUCTIONS OF VERBALS

A word or group of words that is derived from a verb and is used like an adjective or a noun is called a verbal. A verbal that is used like an adjective is called a participle. The verbals that are used like nouns may be called verbal nouns or infinitives; but they are usually divided into two classes and given different names: (1) The root form of the verb, with or without *to,* is called an infinitive; (2) the *ing* form is called a gerund. This chapter describes verbals in three sections—Participles, Gerunds, Infinitives. (A table of the forms of verbals is in Part Four, pages 377-378.)

A. Participles

1. Active and passive participles. If a pupil who is beginning to study participles should see a complete exhibit of the tenses and voices of the participles of some verb, he would be terrified. Teachers might well be terrified at the seeming intricacies of past and perfect passive. But if a pupil begins with an easy exercise in active participles of one word, proceeds to an easy exercise in passive participles of one word, and then meets gradually some of the participles that consist of two or three words, he can go on without perplexity to a mastery of these verbal adjectives.

A majority of the participles found in literature are single words that end in *ing*—the active participles. It is unfortunate that the term "active" means one thing when applied to verbs and another thing when applied to participles: an active verb is one that has an object, but an active participle is one that ends in *ing*. This ambiguity is not likely to be noticed by pupils and should not be emphasized.

Participles, like adjectives, modify in four positions: (1)

attributive—"*barking* dogs, the *breaking* waves"; (2) appositive—"Gordon, *rising* suddenly, shouted at the intruder," or "*Rising* suddenly, Gordon shouted"; (3) predicate—"This answer was most *perplexing*. They could now be seen *stumbling* down the trail"; (4) objective predicate—"I saw him *watching* me closely. We found him *working* in the garden."

Appositive participles may be placed beyond the verb: "Gordon shouted at the intruder, *springing* from the couch and *throwing* off his coat." Such an appositive may be a closely restrictive modifier, written without a comma: "He fell asleep *coming* home."

Predicate participles are common after *lie, sit, stand, go,* etc.: "He lay *gasping,* sat *musing,* stood *leaning* on the mantel, goes *whistling* to his doom." They may be used after passive verbs: "was seen *entering,* was caught *cheating.*"

When a preliminary acquaintance has been made with the single-word active participles, the single-word passive participles may be taken up. These indicate that the modified word receives the action. They are the form that is given last in the principal parts of a verb, as in *see, saw, seen.* They usually end in *d, t,* or *n;* sometimes in *de, ne, ng, k, g: wounded, felt, swollen, made, borne, sung, sunk, dug.*

Passive participles modify in the four positions that are explained above for active participles: (1) a *wounded* bear; (2) the brook, *swollen* by the rains; (3) she seemed *overcome;* (4) had a trench *dug.* Passive participles after *is, was,* etc., can seldom be distinguished surely from parts of passive verbs—for example, in "the rock was deeply *scratched,*" though *scratched* seems like a participle, it could be called part of the passive verb *was scratched.*

The passive participles are also called "past" or "perfect" participles, because they serve to form perfect tenses: "has sent, had been sent." The choice of a name has some importance. Three reasons for preferring "passive" should be considered. (1) When the participles are used as adjective modi-

fiers, they are almost always passive in meaning. The only exceptions are some rare intransitives, in archaic style, like *grown* or *done:* "Leo, now *grown* old and *done* with his activities." The participles refer to past time only when they serve as part of a verb. (2) The worst vulgarism that schools contend against is the use of the participle for the past tense: *seen* for *saw, done* for *did,* etc. If, then, we tell pupils to distinguish between the "past" tense and the "past" participle, we are using the same word for both the correct form and the error; whereas "passive participle" and "past tense" are distinctive. (3) Teaching is more concrete if we divide participles into two groups; they may be divided in either of two ways: by tenses (present and perfect), by voice (active and passive). It is therefore illogical to name one group by voice (active) and the other by tense (past). Since the usual name for the *ing* participles is "active," the natural name to furnish a contrast is "passive." (But "past" is more convenient in textbooks because it applies to all participles; it is used in Part Four.)

When the advance is made from participles of one word to participles of two or three words, the natural line to follow is to keep up the distinction with which we started—between active and passive. It is easy to show that instead of "Gordon, *rising* suddenly" we may use "Gordon, *having risen* suddenly." Instead of the one-word passive participle *seen* we may use the three-word passive, *having been seen.*

2. Finding the modified words. The word that a participle modifies is found by asking, "Who or what?" The word may be widely separated from the participle.

1. He was a self-indulgent old *man* whose every wish had always been fulfilled instantly by attentive servants, *surrounded* now by toadying relatives and parasites.

The sentence looks as if *surrounded* modified *servants,* and we may say that the sentence is clumsily made. But authors

sometimes write in that way. It is nonsense to say that the servants were surrounded by parasites. Who or what was surrounded? The old man was surrounded.

Of course the modifying by a participle may be very different from the modifying by an ordinary adjective. Participles are far more detached in meaning than adjectives are; they are often distinctly verbal in meaning and accomplish as much as if they were verbs in an independent clause. But grammatically they lack the prime requisite of a verb: they do not make statements. They merely indicate an action; they are attached to nouns and pronouns as subordinate elements of a sentence. They are said, in the language of grammar, to "modify" these nouns or pronouns.

The untrained pupil mistakes these verb-like modifiers for verbs and uses them as if they could form independent sentences. Thus he makes "half-sentence faults." The most important reason for studying participles is to make clear that participles are not verbs and cannot form sentences.

3. Unrelated participles. It is maintained by all textbooks that every participle ought to refer definitely to some word. Teachers have to maintain this dictum as a requirement in composition. Pupils are ill trained if they are not made to realize that participles must modify something. A participle that fails to modify in a respectable way is called "dangling" or "hanging."

Yet teachers should understand that the school requirement is somewhat artificial, does not represent the complete truth about literature, and is enforced in school only to make pupils conscious of what they are about when they use participles. An author who uses an unrelated participle only once in a while, and in such a way that a reader is not distracted, cannot be convicted of error by an appeal to a rule of grammar; he is doing only what most authors do now and then. A pupil who uses a participle ignorantly is in danger of making his whole theme ridiculous. We must

train him to observe the rule strictly in his school writing; then he will be able to judge, if he becomes a writer, how far he can safely depart from the teaching. If a teacher supposes that every unrelated participle must be a vulgarism, he will be attacking the facts of literature. But if he objects to those unrelated participles that show ignorance or carelessness, he will be eternally right. Between the two attitudes there is a world of difference.

It is worth any teacher's while—for several reasons—to learn of the commonness of unrelated participles in literature.

2. The excellence aimed at was to consist in the interesting of the affections by the dramatic truth of such emotions as would naturally accompany such situations, *supposing* them real. (Coleridge)

3. *Continuing* their march, the country now spread out into broad savannas. (Prescott)

4. Yet now, *looking* back, there seems to have been a shadow over him. (A. C. Benson)

5. *Piecing* them together, it does not appear that many orders have been canceled. (Stuart Chase)

6. *Singling* out here only one topic, it is interesting to note Mr. Wilson's youthful zeal. (New York *Times* editorial)

7. *Examining* the facts that led to the prefaces being written, this seems accurate. (R. Cantwell in a *Nation* book-review)

8. *Reverting* to the question of method, how shall such a message be conveyed? (W. S. Hinchman in *The American School*)

The quotation from Hinchman is significant because he has been a teacher of English since 1901, is the author of a number of educational and literary books, and shows by the frequency of his unrelated participles that he has no compunctions about using them.

4. Absolute participles. In Chapter 21 there is an explanation of certain participles which are used in such an unrelated way that they become prepositions. There are a number of participles which are, in the best of usage, not connected with any modified word, and which approach a prepositional use.

9. *Provided* (or *providing*) the report is favorable, you will be recommended.

10. *Granting* (or *granted*) that there has been much deceit and trickery, we must still recognize the honesty of some practitioners.

11. There are almost a hundred names on the list, not *counting* those that are starred.

12. It may be said, *speaking* generally, that men achieve all the success they deserve.

13. *Judging* by the early returns, the election of McDevitt is assured.

Other participles commonly used absolutely are *admitting, allowing, beginning, disregarding, leaving, seeing, supposing, taking, talking.* Some others less well established are *calling, putting, starting. Looking* is fast making its way as an absolute. *Turning, coming,* and the like are used perpetually in scientific writing to indicate a new topic, without being related to any noun.

14. *Coming* back to more immediate economic relationships, the wage problem furnishes an excellent example.

From here the absolute uses spread into very dubious territory—for example:

15. *Pushing* this comparison a little further, it is stated that after fertilization we have the period of greatest cell vigor.

It is doubtful whether any reasonable scientist would care to defend *coming* and *pushing* if he were familiar with the questions of syntax involved.

5. Participles as vague modifiers of subjects. In "He went *singing* to his work" the verbal is considered by all grammarians to be a kind of predicate modifier of the subject. No grammarian would deny that in the following sentence the passive participle after the verb modifies the subject of the verb: "Yet those who are prepared will never close the book *dissatisfied.*"

6. How participles resemble verbs. Participles, inasmuch as they cannot make statements, are very different from

verbs; but they have all the other functions of verbs. They take objects and predicate nominatives: "sending a *message,* giving *him* a *present,* making *him* a *hero,* being a true *friend,* being *white-hot.*" They are modified by adverbs and by adverbial phrases and clauses: "groping *blindly,* walking *on the parapet,* voting *as the boss directed.*"

7. "Fused" participles. We have seen a participle used as an objective predicate: "I saw him watching." The participle modifies the object so closely that it seems to be a part of the object. A comparable use of participles is seen with the objects of prepositions: "I never dreamed of *him* becoming so popular." The construction may occur after verbs—"Do you mind the radio being on?"—but usually comes after prepositions, as in "I object to *a man* boasting so." The participle is in such close association with the nouns that H. W. Fowler, in 1915, coined a term to describe this peculiar use—"fused participle." Fowler despised the construction and has breathed out slaughter against it ever since. In his *Modern English Usage* (1927) he wrote an impassioned, but quite delightful, essay about it, deploring "the progress of corruption" and saying: "The rapidity with which it is gaining ground is portentous . . . The construction is grammatically indefensible . . . The reader should be sick to death of the fused participle." He teaches that instead of an object and a participle we ought to use a possessive and a gerund—"of *his* becoming." This requirement of a gerund is generally taught in American textbooks, especially for personal pronouns. With nouns the gerund is not so generally considered necessary. With some pronouns the gerund is impossible, since they have no possessive form—for example: "The chance of this happening is very remote." (See part 3 of section B of this chapter; see the discussion at the end of this chapter, page 295.)

8. Compound participles. Active participles may be compounded with nouns that are the objects of the participles: "a record-breaking attendance, a heart-rending story, a hair-

raising shriek." Passive participles may be made from nouns, signifying "made of, fitted with," and the like—for example: "honeyed, moneyed, pronged, cultured, crescented, talented, storied, towered." Critics are hostile to such words while they are new: Johnson regretted *honeyed,* and Coleridge thought that *talented* was a vile thing; but the protestations had no effect. Active and passive participles are often compounded with adjectives or adverbs: "horny-handed, red-whiskered, well-known, deep-seated, wrong-headed, rattle-brained, high-flying, far-reaching."

B. Gerunds

The uselessness, and the impossibility, of distinguishing between gerunds and pure nouns is explained in Chapter 11, page 95. Of course there are *ing* words derived from verbs and used like nouns that have lost all verbal meaning. For example, *ceiling* once meant "that which ceils a room," but now means only the overhead surface of a room. If any inquisitive pupil contends that *covering* is a gerund, he should be allowed to have his way. But only a peculiar or cantankerous pupil will make such an argument about words like *lining* or *lightning* or *clothing.* These have become pure nouns.

Inasmuch as gerunds are verbal, they may be modified by adverbs or adverbial phrases and clauses: "after walking *steadily,* by comparing *closely,* after looking *into it,* a habit of talking *while he ate.*" But inasmuch as they are noun-like, they may be modified by adjectives and attributive nouns: "by *steady* walking, without *careful* cultivating, turned to *highway* picketing."

Gerunds, just like participles, may take the objects and predicates that could be used with the corresponding verbs. (See under Participles above, page 275.)

Gerunds are not ordinarily used in more than half of the constructions of nouns. It is possible that somewhere in literature an author has used a gerund as a noun of address,

and quite likely that an author has used a gerund as a nominative of exclamation; it would not require great ingenuity to concoct a sentence in which a gerund was an indirect object or an objective predicate or in the possessive case. But all these constructions would be highly exceptional. Descriptions of the ordinary constructions are given below.

1. Gerunds as subjects of verbs. Examples of subjects are: "*Loafing* was not so agreeable. Any *whispering* irritated him. There is much *complaining* among the prisoners. It is pleasant *lying* here. It is worth while *making* a survey of conditions. It is no use *crying* over spilled milk." If we ask what is pleasant, what is worth while, what is no use, the answers are the gerunds *lying, making, crying.*

Presumably the same explanation applies with the expletive *there* as with the expletive *it:* "There's no use *trying.* There was no use *asking* about it." But since the noun *use* is frequently modified by a phrase in which a gerund is an object of a preposition, it is natural to say that *trying* and *asking* are the objects of an understood *of* or *in:* "no use *of* trying, no use *in* asking." Unless a teacher strongly favors understanding prepositions, he should not adopt that explanation here. Some authors would never use the preposition and would resent having their syntax misrepresented.

2. Gerunds as objects of verbs. "They hated *being spied* upon. I enjoy *listening* to you. I advised his *giving* up one course."

3. Gerunds as objects of prepositions. "Tell me about *managing* a jib, not without *sacrificing* something, rebelled against *having* to keep so clean, objected to *going* out so often." While a class is studying gerunds, the teacher can do good work (if he wants to discourage fused participles) by exhibiting on the board gerunds that are modified by possessive pronouns and nouns: "heard of his being, counted on their coming, opposed to your going, resulted in our securing, about the waiter's acting so, disliked the chairman's saying,

nothing in the way of Spain's doing so, asked about Mr. Way's resigning." Some authors are scrupulous about using the possessive, as in "the necessity of a man's losing his life." They may even take pains to use a possessive plural: "There is no question of any substantial payments' being made."

There is one group of verbal constructions that are commonly explained as objects of understood prepositions: "Don't waste time [in or by] looking at it, I caught cold [by] sitting in a draught." The verbals can more safely be called participles that modify the subjects of the verbs. But certain gerunds can be best explained as objects of a lost preposition, *a* (the old *on*), as in *go a hunting:* "go (a) fishing, go (a) driving, set (a) going."

The expletive *there* sometimes appears, and is necessary, between a preposition and a gerund of *be* that is its object: "no doubt about *there* being, without *there* having been need."

4. Gerunds as abverbial objectives. A gerund after the adjective *worth* is most easily explained as an adverbial objective that shows how much worth: "worth considering, worth investigating." But it may also be said that these gerunds are governed by, are a kind of object of, *worth.*

5. Gerunds as predicate nominatives. "His only exercise was *riding* an hour each afternoon. Her efforts to be modest were considered mere *attitudinizing.*"

6. Gerunds as modifiers. If a pupil sees "bowling alley," he naturally supposes that *bowling,* since it describes alley, is a participle. But an active participle always indicates that its modified word is performing the action: a crushing weight is a weight that is doing the crushing; a soaring bird is a bird that is soaring; a resounding noise is one that resounds. A bowling alley, however, is not one that bowls; no alley was ever seen to do any bowling. It is an alley *for bowling.* The word *bowling* is a kind of noun used to name the purpose of the alley. Nouns are frequently used to explain other nouns in this way—for example: a *registration* blank, a *football* field,

a *telegraph* wire, a *mountain* resort. Nouns so used might be called adjectives, since they describe nouns and are thus doing the work of adjectives. But they are entered in the dictionaries as nouns, and only nouns. When they are applied to other nouns, they are commonly hyphenated: magazine-rack, sofa-cushion, deck-chair, fire-escape. Almost any noun may be thus applied to another to describe it by saying what it is for: a rack for magazines, a chair for the deck, etc. So when we speak of building material or a camping place or a swimming pool, we mean material for building, place for camping, pool for swimming. The *ing* words are not participles that show the action of the material or the place or the pool; they are a kind of noun that describes the use; they are gerunds. This nicety will seldom help any pupil and will almost certainly do harm if argued before a whole class, but a teacher may need the knowledge for an emergency.

Common examples of modifying gerunds are: "a reading course, engineering feats, filling station, moving van, a marauding expedition, living conditions, sinking fund." In "painting class" and "singing voice" the verbals could, conceivably, be called participles; but the expressions mean a class in which painting is taught, a voice adapted for singing; the words are really gerunds. In "at boiling temperature" the temperature is not boiling; it is the degree of heat that causes boiling.

7. Gerunds as nominative absolutes. A gerund in this construction is a possibility: "Promenading in the foyer having been prohibited, we stepped out to the street." But the combination of two *ing* words usually sounds so clumsy that it is avoided.

8. Gerunds in apposition. Gerunds may be in apposition with nouns or with other gerunds: "He had only one bad fault: perpetually *being* late. He warned me against apologizing to customers—*begging* their pardon when I had done nothing."

9. Compound gerunds. The modifying gerunds frequently form compound nouns that are hyphenated: "writing-pad, sol-

dering-iron, melting-pot, laughing-stock." Or a noun may be prefixed to a gerund to show that it receives the action of the gerund, as in *time-saving*. Other familiar examples are: "horse-racing, log-rolling, book-binding, wool-gathering, star-gazing, piano-moving." Sometimes a gerund is hyphenated with an adverb, as in "a rounding-up, a jumping-off place, a distinct letting-down, a turning-in of accounts."

C. Infinitives

All the dictionaries and large modern grammars explain infinitives with a unanimity that is not shown in the treatment of any other part of speech. They begin with a definition like this from the *Oxford Dictionary:* "The uninflected form of the verb, a substantive with certain verbal functions." They explain that *to* may be a mere meaningless sign of the infinitive, or may be a preposition that has the true infinitive for its object and forms modifying phrases. Section C follows this standard treatment: 1. The infinitives in which *to* is a mere sign and is part of the infinitives, 2. the infinitives (relatively few in number) that are used without *to,* 3. the infinitives that are the object of *to.*

1. The "to" infinitives

The attitude of the teacher is important in dealing with infinitives. If he is determined to teach all constructions strictly, as though they were essential for mental exercise, he will use time to little purpose. If he is ill-at-ease because his knowledge of infinitives is hazy, he will confuse the class and waste time. If he cannot look forward to any good result in composition, he might better omit infinitives, for he will accomplish nothing worth while. But the teacher who is at home with infinitives, and who leads a class through the principal constructions with a well-defined purpose that pupils are allowed to share, will know that he is doing a good piece of work—no more complicated and no less enjoyable than any other field of syntax.

This kind of teacher is amused by the perfunctory treatment of infinitives in textbooks—as if these verbals were a technicality that lies outside the realities of composition. Infinitives, he knows, are very much alive, abounding in every story, a sprightly and wayward part of speech that pupils must know about if they are to be masters of the rudiments of style. He teaches infinitives with interest and conviction, but he puts a wary limitation on the meaning of "knowing" about infinitives. This limitation, so necessary to good teaching, is the topic of the next paragraph.

There is a sense in which the most seasoned grammarian never can know all about infinitives. Their constructions are often obscure and sometimes inexplicable. The constructions are, for the most part, mere analogies with the constructions of nouns—analogies that may not fit very well and that do not explain much. Often it happens that one analogy is as good as another and that neither is in any true sense an explanation. With most of these doubtful explanations the teacher must be familiar if he is to conduct a recitation confidently. If he is familiar with the possibilities, *he will not require pupils to conform to any but the most common and obvious ones.* He will pass lightly over exceptional or devious constructions and will limit the recitation to those uses that are plain and regular. He will not stress any puzzling details, but will restrict his work to this objective: Can you recognize infinitives, and can you show how most of them have some resemblance to nouns?

The purposes of teaching infinitives are described in Chapter 11: to enable pupils to realize that infinitives do not make sentences, to enable them to improve their style by using infinitives to vary sentence-patterns. The novice teacher is amazed to hear that the appositive infinitives are the most important ones. This strange truth is explained below, page 288. The work with infinitives is stimulated and related to real life if the teacher puts on the board sentences—preferably from newspapers or stories—that show the various ways in which authors employ these verbal nouns with good effect.

Infinitives, like gerunds, may be modified by adverbs and adverbial phrases and clauses. They are not modified by adjectives attributively, but may be modified by predicate adjectives: "It was *hard* to pry off the cover" (that is, to pry was hard). They may, like gerunds and participles, have the same objects and predicates as the corresponding verbs. (See under Participles above, page 275.)

There are fewer constructions of infinitives than of gerunds. Infinitives have no possessive case, are not used in address nor as indirect objects nor as adverbial objectives, and do not qualify nouns as gerunds do. They could be used as absolutes—"to speak aloud being forbidden"—but this would be freakish. The usual constructions are as follows:

1. Infinitives as subjects of verbs. "*To be* on time was considered bad form." Infinitive subjects, as explained on page 211, are commonly introduced by an *it* that precedes the verb and looks like the subject: "It is easy *to give* if you are wealthy. It was not unusual *to have* the line stretch a hundred feet from the ticket window. It will be quite agreeable for me *to entertain* them." The last sentence means that to entertain will be agreeable for me; *for me* modifies the verb *will be.* This use of *for* with a subject infinitive extends to many constructions in which the infinitive and the phrase are so blended as to be inextricable. (See page 293.)

2. Infinitives as objects of verbs. "David hated *to see* him go. I should like *to hear* another stanza. We have *to wait* here. Promise not *to tell* anyone. He was planning *to tear* the fence down and *to leave* my field unguarded." An infinitive object of a verb may be introduced by *it:* "We found it difficult *to keep* awake"—that is, we found to keep awake difficult. For other examples see page 211.

The constructions explained in the previous paragraph are easily understood. Did David hate anything? Yes, he hated to see. So it is easy to go through the form of saying: "Do we have anything? Yes, we have to wait." But the object, *to wait,* is unreal. It is not something that we really have, not

like a noun. Hence at this early stage a teacher can begin to talk thus about the constructions: "What we are doing is to see how a noun in the same position would be explained. If you put some noun in the place of *to wait*—for instance, 'We have a cat'—you would say that *cat* is the object of *have*. So we say that the infinitive, like the noun, is the object of *have*." Thus the way is prepared for other constructions that puzzle because the infinitives are so unlike nouns in their meanings.

One of these constructions is an object infinitive used after an indirect object: "I told him *to go*." It makes no sense to argue that "I told to go," for I actually told no such thing. *The meaning does not reveal the construction.* Infinitives are not nouns. What we do when we hunt for the construction of an infinitive is to see what would be the construction of a noun in its place. Try "I told him a *lie*, I told him the *truth*." Here the nouns are obvious objects. So we say that the infinitives in the same position are objects. We do not affirm that I told him the going; we simply say that, as a matter of syntax, a noun in the place of *to go* would be called an object.

In "I asked him a *question;* I taught him a *trick*" the nouns are the objects of the verbs, and *him* is an indirect object. Hence a natural explanation of the infinitives in parallel constructions is that they are objects: "I asked him *to wait*. I taught him *to enunciate* more clearly. I allowed them *to enter*. I permitted him *to stay*." Even in "I beg you *to remain*" we can conceive that *to remain* is the object and *you* the indirect object.

3. Infinitives as objective predicates. In other constructions where there is a combination of an infinitive with an objective pronoun or noun we can hardly substitute a noun for the infinitive, and therefore can hardly explain the construction of the infinitive. Examples are:

16. I expect you *to be disappointed*.
17. This proved him *to be* a friend.
18. She wants us *to be* more polite.
19. He ordered me *to be* silent.
20. He commanded bridges *to be built*.

These infinitives have a certain resemblance to objective predicates, for they indicate what *you, him, us, me,* and the *bridges* are to do or become. When *to be* is used after verbs, it is somewhat parallel to an objective predicate: "I believe it *to be* the truth, consider it *to be,* guarantee it *to be,* suppose them *to be,* cause him *to be.*" (For the single-word infinitives that are objective predicates see below, page 289.)

No one with a sense of humor can relish these far-fetched explanations of infinitives as objective predicates. But no one who desires simplified grammar can afford to discard them unless he is prepared to adopt the only other alternative that grammars propose. The other alternative is to say that an entire group like *you to be disappointed* is an infinitive clause in which *you* is the subject of the infinitive. One who accepts this alternative must then provide for his class new definitions of clause and subject. "Subject of the infinitive" is easy to say and suggests a kind of resemblance to Latin syntax. But the resemblance is no deeper than a coat of varnish. If there really were a subject of the infinitive in English, we should be able to write, "He says himself to be going to walk." Until such a sentence becomes idiomatic English, our language will contain only a few constructions that happen to look like the Latin system of indirect discourse. The pupil who can compose indirect discourse in Latin will be misled by hearing about "subject of the infinitive" in English sentences; the pupil who is not proficient in Latin composition will be mystified by hearing of clauses that have no verbs and subjects that are objects. "Subject of the infinitive" is a Latin fact, but an English fiction. Teachers should count the cost before adopting it.

A critic of grammar-teaching might well exclaim, "A plague o' both your alternatives!" He would be justified. For neither explanation of these infinitives gives any light. Should we, then, surrender to these verbals and agree that they are beyond the scope of a scheme of syntax? Surrender has never been

seriously proposed by any grammarian. Practical teachers are not allowed to surrender. Each must choose one way or the other.

A class should not be led into a discussion of such oddities. If a teacher is familiar with them, if he knows that the explanations given in grammars do not explain anything, he will pass them by with a smile, saying that some thickets of grammar are to be avoided by high-school pupils.

For objects in elliptical clauses see below, page 287.

4. Infinitives as objects of prepositions. The only prepositions that normally take infinitives for objects are *except, but,* and *save:* "He had no duty *except* to welcome the guests. There was nothing for it *but* to swim." If nouns or pronouns are substituted, we see how the infinitives are like objects of the prepositions: "no duty except *this,* nothing for it but a long *swim.*"

5. Infinitives as retained objects. "We were told to wait outside." This is parallel with "We were told a story." The construction is surprisingly common with *tell* and a few other verbs of the same import: "warned not to come nearer, instructed to keep in line, forbidden to leave the grounds."

6. Infinitives as predicate nominatives. If we are analyzing "He is to be promoted soon," we could well agree that *is to be promoted* is the verb. Perhaps it would have been fortunate if grammarians had so agreed a century ago, just as they agreed that *must promote* and *must be promoted* are verbs. In these verbs there are infinitives which are the objects of *must;* but we do not explain them as infinitives; we lump them together with *must* as parts of verbs. Perhaps this sensible custom will some day be extended to include the infinitives with *to.* Any teacher should feel at liberty to extend it in his own practice; for he may make the path easier for his pupils. But he may not. There are two reasons why it is dangerous to teach that *to* infinitives are part of the verb: (1) no grammar teaches in that way; (2) it is hard, because it is inconsistent, to call *is to be promoted* a verb unless we also call *should have liked*

to see a verb. So the probability is strong that a teacher had best follow common custom and rule that *to* infinitives are not parts of verbs.

The common custom of grammars is to explain that in "He is to be promoted soon" the verb is *is,* and that *to be promoted* is a predicate nominative after *is.* We do not argue that the infinitive describes the subject and means the same thing as the subject, for infinitives are not nouns. We simply say that if a noun were substituted for the infinitive, it would be a predicate nominative. Just as *be, seem, appear, remain, feel,* etc., take predicate nouns, so we say that they may take predicate infinitives:

21. It is not *to be seen* anywhere.
22. An engagement was not *to be thought of.*
23. The bill seems *to be* too large.
24. He seems *to have been having* a bad dream.
25. My idea appears *to have succeeded.*
26. The demand was felt *to be* unjust.
27. Marcus was seen *to be* ill-at-ease.
28. Now the report is shown *to be* false.
29. You are reported *to have said* something quite different.

In "The bill seems to be too large" we feel that the real predicate, so far as meaning goes, is *too large;* that is what is affirmed about the bill. We could argue that *to be* is needless, that it is only a meaningless copula. The argument is proper. But the fact remains that, if we want a simple and consistent scheme of infinitives, we had best treat the predicates all alike. In this scheme *to be* is the predicate after *seems; to be* takes after it the predicate adjective *large.*

In "He was about to be rescued" the infinitive may be called the object of *about;* it is better to call it a predicate and to say that *about* is an adverb modifying *was.*

Infinitives after *happen* are common: "She happened to see a vacant chair." These infinitives are sometimes said to be predicates, but there is no parallel sentence in which *happen*

takes a predicate. Since there are unusual sentences in which *happen* has an object, we could say at a pinch that the infinitive is an object. Probably it is more like a modifier; see page 290.

7. Exclamatory infinitives. Infinitives may be used as exclamations that are quite independent of syntax: "Just to think of it! To hear such blasphemous words!"

8. Parenthetical infinitives. Infinitives may be used as detached parenthetical expressions that hardly belong in the syntax: "Well, *to make* a long story short, we got rid of him." Other familiar phrases of this sort are: "to be frank, to tell the truth, to be sure, not to mention." These can be explained as modifying a verb to some degree. For example, in *"To hear* him talk, you would think he had been a general" the infinitive is a kind of modifier of *would think,* equivalent to "if you heard him talk." See the modifying infinitives, page 290.

9. Elliptical infinitives. Infinitives with interrogative pronouns and adverbs seem to be remnants of subordinate clauses: "I don't know what *to do.* How can I tell which *to take?* She couldn't decide whom *to leave* out. You must learn how *to behave* yourself. I don't know where *to look."* Anyone may, if he chooses, amuse himself by guessing what the full clauses are. Unless he puts faith in his power to guess correctly, he will say that the infinitives are, as they stand, objects of verbs; they have pronouns as objects in the first three sentences; in the last two sentences they are joined by *how* and *where.*

In Chapter 24, page 335, there is a discussion of the constructions of nouns and pronouns that are used after *than.* They seem to be remnants of clauses, as in "No one is more respected than he [is respected]." This sort of explanation can be given for infinitives after *than:* "There can be no greater satisfaction than to receive such praise [is a satisfaction]"—that is, the infinitive is the subject of the understood *is.*

Chapter 24 explains (page 336) that the constructions of nouns after *as* are often completely obscured; we can only say that the nouns are linked in an irregular way by this universal coupling, *as*. Infinitives are linked by *as* to complete comparisons made with *so* and *such:* "The din was such as *to terrify* us, be so kind as *to pass,* not such as *to endear* him, went so far as *to ridicule,* roaring so as *to drown.*" The infinitives are—if they have any constructions—the subjects of understood verbs: "was such as to terrify us [would be]."

10. Infinitives in apposition. This is the most important construction for direct application to composition. It is frequently employed by authors thus: He was liable to fall into the most fatal error of a creative artist—*to write* outside his range." *To write* is in apposition with *error*. Pupils who do not know about appositive infinitives are handicapped in their reading. An illustration is the trouble caused in literature classes by "to hear the lark" and "then to come" in *L'Allegro*.

An infinitive may be in apposition with a previous infinitive: "He seemed to think I ought *to take* a vacation, *to give* the brain a rest for a month." *To give* is in apposition with *to take*.

Pupils, especially the more ambitious ones, often write appositive infinitives without any realization of what they are doing; since the infinitive is verb-like, seems independent, and has an important group of words clustered about it, it seems to form a sentence; the pupil therefore writes it with a capital after a period: "Jim wanted to run away from it all. *To hide* himself where no friend should ever see him again." Thus ignorance of infinitives is one of the causes of half-sentence faults.

2. Infinitives without "to"

1. Mere ellipsis. In a series of infinitives *to* may be written with the first and understood with the others: "The doctor told me to sleep as much as I could, [to] eat all I liked, and [to] exercise very little."

2. **Infinitives in apposition.** "I know what I'm going to do—*get* a release and *apply* to your company." The infinitives are in apposition with *to do,* or with the whole *what* clause.

3. **Infinitives after prepositions.** "She did nothing except *make* a few motions. There's nothing to do but *keep* cheerful." The common idiom in which *but* has an object infinitive is "not help but." This is frowned on in American textbooks and is called an Americanism by Jespersen, but Poutsma says it is "frequent in the works of English writers." He quotes Hall Caine: "We could not *help but* love each other."

4. **Infinitives after *need* and *dare*.** After *need* and *dare* the infinitive without *to* may be used: "You need not *fear;* I dare not *hope;* I dare *say* he is right."

5. **Imperatives that look like infinitives.** Certain very colloquial expressions formed with an imperative *go* contain a second verb that seems like an infinitive and has been so explained: "Go *get* it, go *lie* down, go *hang* yourself." But *get, lie,* and *hang* are really, as the dictionaries make clear, a second imperative, as if the expressions were "go and get, go and lie, go and hang."

6. **Infinitives as objective predicates.** If we look for a noun that will parallel the infinitive in "This will make him *succeed,*" we can supply *a success* or *a hero* or *a socialist.* These nouns would be objective predicates. Hence the normal explanation of the infinitive *succeed* is that it is, like the nouns, an objective predicate. In "We heard the mayor *telling* all about the water-system" *telling* is a participle that modifies *mayor* as an objective predicate; it is therefore natural to say that the infinitive is an objective predicate in "We heard the mayor *tell.*" In the following sentences it is easy to see how the infinitives have a certain resemblance to objective predicates: "We could feel it *move;* we watched it *descend;* I have had boys *tell* me; I want to have you *look* your best." Mätzner, Whitney, Jespersen, Poutsma, and Curme all unite in speaking of such infinitives as a kind of adjunct to the object—that is, as a kind of objective predicate.

3. Infinitives that are the object of "to"

In Old English the infinitive had a special case-ending, the dative, which showed unmistakably that it was the object of *to*. For example, *bindan* was the infinitive form that was used as subject or object of a verb; *bindanne* was the form used as the object of a preposition; *to bindanne* meant "to the binding" or "for binding." The ending was lost, but the prepositional phrase remains in such idioms as "money to lend" and "easy to see." *Lend* and *see* are the objects of *to;* these phrases modify *money* and *easy*. The modifying infinitive phrases are very numerous, occurring about as often as all other constructions combined.

The test for recognizing a modifying infinitive is to see whether the gerund and another preposition (usually *for*) can be substituted—for example, with adjectives:

good to drink = good for drinking
ready to start = ready for starting
hard to catch = hard for catching
sorry to hear = sorry at or because of hearing
willing to give = willing for giving

Infinitive phrases may modify the adverbs *too* and *enough*.

long enough to see = long enough for seeing
too weak to stand up = too weak for standing

They may modify nouns.

a house to rent = a house for renting
a road to be avoided = a road for being avoided
some pork to flavor the beans = for flavoring the beans
in a position to help them = position for helping

They often modify verbs.

I rose to reply = rose for replying
They paused to look = paused for looking
He cut off a finger to save the hand = cut for saving
I hesitate to say so = hesitate at saying
I came to distrust him = came to distrusting
My heart ached to think of it = ached at thinking
I induced them to do nothing = induced to doing

Pupils should understand that the test with a gerund and *for* seldom produces a normal idiom; it merely produces a phrase that gives an indication of how *to* and the infinitive are used. Suppose, as an illustration, that a pupil is inquiring about the infinitive in "sat down to think." He finds that there is no way to substitute a noun—unless he tries *a thinker* as a predicate! This would be so ingenious that it should be applauded. Pupils should always look first for some possible explanation as a noun construction; if the search fails, they should try the modifier explanation. Could the sentence mean that he sat down for thinking? Yes, the phrase indicates that the infinitive shows purpose, that it is a phrase which modifies *sat*. But if some noun can be supplied as an object (as in "began to think, tried to think, liked to think"), the infinitive should be called an object.

What about "I am obliged to rush"? The clever pupil might think of *to rush* as a retained object. This is excellent brain-work and should be praised, even if the teacher does not agree with it. Any thoughtful answer about infinitives should be accepted. If we can think of nothing better than the very dubious "obliged to or for rushing," that solution will have to be accepted. What about "persuade you to return"? If a pupil calls the infinitive an objective predicate, he has done well; if he argues that *to return* is like "into returning," he has done equally well. It often happens that there is no right answer which is superior to any other answer. All we ask of pupils is (1) that they should recognize infinitives, (2) that they should make some tolerable effort to show how each infinitive is used like a noun.

For some reason pupils are over-fond of "object of *to*"—perhaps because there is activity in the idea, perhaps because of their passion for objects. The best classroom policy is to rule that the modifying phrase should always be second choice.

A few examples will illustrate the more unusual modifiers. "He is a rascal to act so." No explanation is conceivable except that he is a rascal for acting so. The phrase could be

said to modify *rascal,* but really modifies *is.* Pupils should be praised for looking away from the word next to the infinitive, for suspecting some word farther away (especially the verb).

"He is going to come." We cannot supply any noun that would be an object of *is going,* but could imagine that there might be a predicate after this verb; that explanation would be ingenious. Nearly all pupils would prefer to say that the phrase modifies the verb—though "going for coming" is absurd in sound. The infinitive is probably a modifier.

"He raised his arm as if to intercept the pass." *As if* suggests that there is an elliptical clause; we could supply "he was going" after *as if.* But we had better discourage the understanding of words unless they are inevitable and obvious. We need only explain that the infinitive is like a phrase: "as if for intercepting."

"I quickened my pace, so as to overtake him." The infinitive of purpose (quickened my pace for overtaking him) is linked by a needless *so as.* "So as to" is an ancient and highly respectable idiom.

"There is, to be sure, one other possibility." We can feel that *to be* is a sort of qualifier of *is,* but no preposition and gerund that we could supply would approximate any real idiom. We should welcome the explanation that *to be* is a modifier; we should concede that it is a kind of parenthesis which is not connected with the syntax.

"He signaled to me to haul down the flag." The pupil who argued that *to haul* is the object of *signaled* has a strong case and should be approved. But probably the infinitive is a modifier of *signaled* (signaled for hauling).

"I pleaded with her not to dismiss me." Perhaps the infinitive could be called an object; but since we could not supply a noun that would be the direct object of *pleaded,* we judge that the infinitive is like *for dismissing.*

"This seat happened to be behind a post." We cannot supply any noun that would be idiomatic after *happen;* so

we must take refuge in the phrasal explanation. It is better to say that there is no explanation that makes much sense.

The curious "telescoped" construction of an infinitive and a *for* phrase can best be approached by beginning with infinitives that are subjects of the verb. In each of the following sentences it is easy to see that the infinitive is the subject.

30. It is easy for me *to decide.* (To decide is easy for me.)
31. It is not for me *to dispute* him.
32. It would be wrong for the United States *to assist* a belligerent with money.
33. Will it be convenient for you *to criticize* this? (Will to criticize be convenient for you?)
34. It would be quite absurd for me *to undertake* it.

If we shift the order of words in sentence 34, we produce a statement in which the construction of the infinitive is somewhat blurred.

35. For me *to undertake* it would be quite absurd.

The *for* phrase has almost lost its modifying force; it now belongs so closely with the infinitive that it seems almost as if *me* was a sort of subject of the infinitive, so that the whole group is the subject of *would be.* But we can still disentangle the infinitive and see that it is the subject.

In the next sentences we can see that the infinitives have their own constructions, and that the *for* phrases are separable:

36. He gave permission for them *to come* (permission for coming).
37. There is no use for me *to cry* (no use for crying).
38. There is no need for me *to be told* that (no need for being told).
39. This device makes it possible for a man *to tend* two machines at once (makes to tend possible for a man).
40. It is hard for me *to say.*

But in the next set of sentences we have difficulty in explaining the infinitive if the *for* phrase is omitted:

41. He stood aside for George *to enter.*
42. We waited for the excitement *to quiet* down.

43. It wasn't unusual for the patrons *to ask* credit.
44. For this bull *to provide* the most real danger he must know how to use his horns.

The discreet explanation seems to be that the whole cluster of words after *for* is the object of *for*. Other familiar examples are: "for him to return, for it to stop, for you to see it, for others to complete the work, for all the world to read, for you to give me your opinion."

Modifying infinitives may be joined by *as if*. For example, we may say "knelt to beseech" or "knelt as if to beseech." (*As if* suggests an elliptical clause, but no clause is inevitably demanded.) Modifying infinitives are also joined by *such as* and *so as:* "The rendering of the selection was *such as* to delight the audience; you must respond cheerfully, *so as* to rouse no suspicion." We cannot fit *for* and a gerund into these phrases as a test, but we can hardly explain the infinitives except as modifiers.

4. The split infinitive

Old-time grammars used to preach that no words should ever intervene between *to* and the verbal part of an infinitive, as in "to humbly accept our fortune." And to this day—though a thousand grammarians and critics have given complete demonstrations that the split infinitive has always been an accepted and proper arrangement of words—the ancient taboo is often repeated. But there are indications that the taboo is almost extinct. It is now a standard joke. If an essayist wishes a good example of the follies of purism, he can always carry conviction by ridiculing the dictum that an infinitive ought not to be split. If so precise a man as Herbert Spencer wrote "to rightly connect" in his essay on style, we may safely conclude that a split infinitive is not an impropriety. The avoidance of the split is sometimes pedantic and cumbersome, as in "served greatly to impoverish" or "to watch calmly the onset."

But it still remains true—it will always be true—that words should not be carelessly intruded after *to*. Such split infinitives as "to unspeakably differ from a machine" or "to every once in a while bow" are clumsy and disagreeable.

Discussion of the Fused Participle

The case of participle vs. gerund has been violently debated for 180 years. In 1752 George Harris, a scholar and the son of a bishop, opened the age-long fight by denouncing the gerund; he contended that there was no excuse for the possessive in "doctrine of a future state's being taught." He was upheld a decade later by Bishop Lowth, perhaps the most influential of the eighteenth-century grammarians, who considered that the possessive noun in "the rule's being observed" was an error that ought to be rooted out.* But by 1779 the tide of battle had turned. Robert Baker argued that the possessive with a gerund was the correct idiom; and Webster, ten years later, laid down an invariable rule that required the possessive. The rule has been humbly rehearsed in American textbooks from that day to this. Authors have often been quite unmindful of the rule, or ignorant of it. Irving, for instance, wrote "a doubt as to *Shakespeare having* been born in her house." English authors have not infrequently used the participle with an objective pronoun: "pardon me saying" (Tennyson), "hear of me being discovered" (Charlotte Brontë). C. T. Onions declared in 1904 that the object with a participle "is the older use, and, moreover, involves nothing illogical or inconsistent with the other uses of the participle."

The fused participle is a necessity in the case of certain pronouns that have no possessive form, such as *this, that, each*. We cannot write "these's being sold," for there is no such possessive, but must write "Have you ever heard of *these being* sold for less?" Yet Fowler, as sane and trustworthy a lexicographer as ever lived, is so carried away by his exceeding wrath against the fused participle that he actually advises us to manufacture a possessive for the sentence "This will result in *many's* having to go into lodgings." To Onions and Curme and Poutsma this

*From S. A. Leonard's *Doctrine of Correctness.*

must seem a form of madness. The rest of us can only blink and resolve to beware of logic and prejudice.

What are the facts of good usage? Fowler himself, with sportsmanlike humor, indicates the probable truth: "A dozen years ago [i.e., in 1915] it was reasonable to describe the fused participle as an ignorant vulgarism; it was not very easy to collect instances of it. Today no one who wishes to keep a whole skin will venture on so frank a description." American teachers had best keep their skins whole. It is still advisable for them to show pupils that the possessive and a gerund is better with personal pronouns: "of its being, to his refusing, for their declining," etc. For if high-school graduates use the participle with these pronouns, they may be considered ill-trained. As for nouns, no teacher should require the possessive unless he is impelled by his conscience.

One use of the fused participle may still safely be called an ignorant vulgarism—the use as a subject of a verb: "Members giving tips is demoralizing the servants of the club." Fowler has collected from English periodicals many examples of this kind of smashed-together subject, but the idiom is still rare on this side of the Atlantic.

The most common fused participle in America is the one that occurs in a *with* phrase at the beginning of a sentence: *"With the Governor running* for President and *the Lieutenant Governor heading* the state ticket, the Democrats naturally stress their state record." This nebulous *with* that has for its object a noun-plus-participle is so prevalent in recent journalism and so fearfully tiresome that we marvel how Fowler could have refrained from censuring it. He makes a protest against the participle after *without,* but makes no mention of *with.* The *with* is called nebulous because it expresses some utterly vague circumstance and is equivalent to "since these conditions exist"—a meaning unknown to the dictionaries and exasperating to sensitive nerves. A typical example is this: *"With laymen groping* for assurance and help in finding a way out, and *politicians offering* panaceas for recovery, it is imperative that an orderly intelligence be devoted to the problems of the day." An American grammarian is tempted to plead that an orderly intelligence should be devoted to the

extirpation of this noxious *with* and its participle. But he must not do so. He must keep silent and trust that whatever is prevalent is right. If the fused participle is right in *with* phrases and if it is right as an objective predicate, how can it be proved wrong after the other prepositions?

The fused participle is not so important as to demand all the space that has been given to it here. The space is used for displaying a remarkable and wholesome demonstration of the futility of logic and the folly of prejudice in arguing about syntax. All that signifies is to learn the facts of good usage. Usage is at present unsettled, but seems to be favoring the fused participle with nouns, as in "The probability was strongly against such a *thing* occurring." In some sentences the possessive would be a monstrosity—for instance: "The name 'steeplechase' is due to any conspicuous *object's,* such as a church *steeple's,* being chosen as a goal." It is likely, for example, that most modern authors would feel no objection to the participles in the following sentence and would not wish to substitute possessives before *being killed:* "After all, you cannot have a war without *men* being killed, and without *a lot of them* being killed by the stupidity of their commanders."

CHAPTER 23

THE USES OF CONJUNCTIONS

There is only one way in which a knowledge of conjunctions is important for composition: the pupil who knows them can distinguish them from the independent adverbs that cause sentence-errors, as shown in Chapters 8 and 20. Most of the teaching of this distinction must be done in connection with adverbs, negatively—"these are *not* conjunctions; you must *not* use commas with adverbs like *however.*" It is well for a pupil to become conscious of the coordinating conjunctions that form compound sentences, for he ought usually to put a comma before the conjunctions; but the study of this part of speech has little effect in securing commas. As for the distinction between coordinating and subordinating conjunctions, it is of small moment for either punctuation or rhetoric. Pupils learn to set off clauses that begin with *but, though, for,* or *because,* without any reference to whether these words are coordinating or subordinating. We can accomplish very little by preliminary study of conjunctions; the knowledge of them is secondary, derived from working with the clauses that they introduce. Therefore this Chapter 23 does not contain much advice that applies directly to teaching tactics. The chapter is for the information of school-teachers, to give them an understanding of the uses of conjunctions.

There are two classes of conjunctions: (1) those that join two words or phrases or clauses which are of the same grammatical kind (*and, or,* etc.); (2) those that join a subordinate clause to a word in another clause (*when, because,* etc.) The first class is called coordinating because the conjunctions join things that are of the same rank; the second class is called subordinating because the conjunctions join a subordinate

clause. The two kinds are described in the two sections of this chapter.

A. Coordinating Conjunctions

There are eight words which may serve as coordinating conjunctions: *and, but, for, nor, only, or, so, yet.* Four other words may, in certain uses, but doubtfully, be called coordinating conjunctions: *else, neither, whereas, while.* The following list of explanations of the conjunctions begins with those that are most commonly and indisputably coordinating, and proceeds to those that are doubtful or unusual.

1. *And.* This is the typical coordinating conjunction: it has no function but to connect pairs of similar words, phrases, or clauses: "hot and cold; came up and went down; on the right hand and on the left; that the affair was no concern of his and that he washed his hands of it; You weary me, and I must beg you to desist."

2. *Or.* For seven centuries *or* has been, in one of its meanings, an indisputable coordinating conjunction that indicates an alternative between two similar words, phrases, or clauses: "one or the other; by hook or by crook; whence it comes or whither it goes; I may die tomorrow, or I may live fifty years." (For the agreement of verbs with subjects connected by *or* see page 169.)

The first member of a pair connected by *or* may be preceded by *either,* which is a kind of adverb that announces the coming of the alternative: "*either* this *or* that, *either* that he would come himself *or* that he would send help." It is universal custom in grammars to consider that *either . . . or,* when they thus work in partnership, are "correlative" conjunctions. (See page 305.)

3. *Nor.* *Nor* is correlative with a preceding negative, which is nearly always *not* or *neither* in modern English: "*neither* here *nor* there, *neither* while he was on duty *nor* when he was in his own home, *not* known *nor* even suspected." Note that when two words, phrases, or clauses in parallel construc-

tion are introduced by a negative—*neither, not,* or *no*—the second member of the pair should be introduced by *nor:* "He has *not* once interfered with us, *nor* even offered advice; it was decided that there should be *no* ceremony, *nor* any religious service."

Two examples of *nor* in a compound sentence are these:

1. The ability to write well cannot be improvised, *nor* can any treatise provide an emergency recipe which will enable its possessor to dispense with laborious preparation.
2. All this, to be sure, is not scientific proof that the dialect of New England was derived from Essex, *nor* is it even scientific proof that any dialect of New England is the same as the dialect in Essex.

4. ***But.*** This word began its career in Old English and has ever since been a regular and unquestioned conjunction. It joins by indicating a contrast: "a rich-looking, but inexpensive cloak; not to drift in the stream of time, but to row; who was acceptable, but who inspired no enthusiasm; The die is cast, but it might be thrown again."

Beyond these four words the list of coordinating conjunctions cannot be extended with absolute certainty. Beyond this limit all statements of grammars are mere opinions. The reason for the lack of certainty is as simple as it is astounding: *there is no accepted definition of a conjunction.* All authorities, to be sure, agree that a coordinating conjunction connects two words or groups of words; but they have never agreed on the meaning of "connect." Anyone who wishes to read more about the nature of conjunctions will find full information in the Discussion at the end of this chapter.

5. ***Yet.*** All the dictionaries enter this word as a conjunction without any grudging or qualification; but their quotations are so inconclusive that a student might well suspect that *yet* is not a conjunction of the same sort as *but.* The adverbial uses of *yet* are very much more numerous than the conjunctional uses. For these reasons some unwary text-makers have not included the word among the conjunctions. It is

actually quite as clearly a conjunction as *but,* for it connects words, phrases, and clauses in the same way: "bold, yet judicious; in secret, yet without concealment; what he had prayed for, yet what he was afraid to receive; The chance is only a thousand to one, yet it does exist." The following quotations show further examples of *yet* with a comma between independent clauses:

3. Today has been the hottest day of the season, *yet* our drive has not been unpleasant. (Lowell)

4. One might suppose that Walker meant to describe as the characteristic English *r* a deep guttural *r, yet* certainly this was not the kind of sound he had in mind. (G. P. Krapp, *The English Language in America*)

5. With respect to pointing, *yet* is treated like *but* or *and.* In the following sentence it is used with the comma: "The fate of Alsace-Lorraine is properly an international question, *yet* after all," etc. (G. Summey, *Modern Punctuation*)

6. Clauses introduced by the adversatives *though, although, yet,* and *nor* are always additive and so are always to be set off with commas: "The Germans had the advantage . . . , *yet* they were constantly outgeneraled." (R. W. Pence, *The Mechanics of Writing*)

This conjunction maintains a curiously dignified and formal aloofness from uneducated minds. Pupils may well be encouraged to use it as an occasional variant for *but.*

The other conjunctions that are classed as coordinating differ from the first five in one important respect: they rarely connect words or phrases. Almost their only function is to connect independent clauses.

6. ***For.*** This word is called a coordinating conjunction by all grammars and dictionaries. Its use is, nevertheless, very different from the uses of *and, or,* and *but.* In the first place, it does not connect words and phrases, but only clauses. In the second place, its meaning is so nearly like that of *because* that the subtle distinction has not been maintained in literature. It is said to add a reason in an independent way, as if it meant "and the reason is"; but Mätzner described its subordinating function and confessed that this could not always

be distinguished from its coordinating function. American teachers will do well not to imagine that their powers of discernment are keener than those of the veteran Mätzner. It has been argued that, since subordinate clauses can be used in front of a main clause, and since a *for* clause cannot be so used, *for* is therefore not subordinating. But *for* clauses were placed before main clauses in Elizabethan English: "You, madam, *for* you are more nobly born, shall live here in banishment." The *for* is explaining the reason for her living here. It is only an accident of usage that *for* no longer anticipates the modified verb.

There is nothing to be gained by trying to show pupils that *for* is a different sort of word from *because;* it may properly be called subordinating. But it may well be put with the coordinating conjunctions when a class is being warned against rambling compound sentences of three or four clauses connected by *and, but, so, for, or.*

7. *So.* In the *Century Dictionary* (1889) the word *so,* with the meaning of "therefore as a result," was called an adverb, and only an adverb. In most of the carefully punctuated matter before 1900 *so* was regarded as an independent adverb and was regularly used with a semicolon. Yet it had long been used occasionally as a conjunction with a comma. For example, Lowell wrote in 1853 a sentence which exactly corresponds to the rambling "and . . . so" structure of the modern untrained pupil; he put it into the mouth of a rustic: "A suit gets pooty well wore out by the time a camp breaks up in the spring, *and* the lumberers want to look about right when they come back into the settlements, *so* they buy something ready-made." In 1854 Lowell wrote a *so* sentence that expressed his own sense of the conjunction: "I did not like to be taken for a city *gent, so* I told him I was born and bred in the country." *So* showed such a fierce vitality between 1900 and 1920 that it overbore all opposition and became an indubitable conjunction. To deny that it was a conjunction in 1920 would have been like denying that automobiles had

become common during those twenty years. In 1924 the *Standard Dictionary* gave it complete recognition as a conjunction; by 1931 it had been recognized in the grammars of Poutsma and Curme.

The history of *so* proves what many teachers never understand: that a conjunction is not a clean-cut fact like a building, which exists or does not exist, but may be a vague and shifting complication of changing status and antiquated theory. A conjunction may be only a balance of opinions that are too evasive to be weighed. Even *so* and *yet* are not unanimously accredited conjunctions.

8. *Only.* *Only* is somewhat debatable. Most of its uses are adverbial, and perhaps all of them could be so explained. But many modern writers feel it as an adversative conjunction about equivalent to *but,* as in "I am willing to go, only I don't feel any enthusiasm." The two following sentences illustrate the distinctly conjunctional use:

7. Women dominate the country as they did in pioneer days, *only* now they do it through control of purchasing power.
8. My own estimate is very similar, *only* I would base it on very different reasons.

The dictionaries are all agreed that *only* is and has long been a proper conjunction.

The four other words which seem to be coordinating conjunctions at times are discussed below in this order: *neither, while, whereas, else.*

9. *Neither.* *Neither* is sometimes used, like *nor,* to join a coordinate clause that follows a negative—thus:

9. I have no money to give, *neither* have I the desire to give.
10. He did not stop, *neither* did he remove his pipe from the down-twisted corner of his mouth.
11. Lo, these many years do I serve thee, *neither* transgressed I at any time thy commandments.

Neither is recognized by all the dictionaries as a conjunction, but the definitions and the quotations leave us somewhat in doubt as to what the dictionaries mean.

10. *While.* With one accord dictionaries and rhetorics assure use that *while* (also *whilst*) is not a coordinating conjunction. It is properly a subordinating conjunction which means "at the same time as." This meaning often implies, and inevitably, a contrast: "We were warm and dry while they were being drenched." Indeed a sentence that begins with "at the same time" may mean as distinct a contrast as if it began with *nevertheless.* Many authors have never felt any scruples against using a *while* that has a meaning decidedly like *but:* "Some were terrified, while others were merely amused." The *Oxford* defines one meaning as "adversative, showing contrast." When one of these adversative subordinate clauses comes after the verb it modifies, it is so similar to a coordinate clause with *but* that a teacher could show the difference only after a long struggle—and probably not then. Indeed it is not likely that he could persuade all members of a convention of philologists that the difference is a real one. Suppose that he could persuade a class; what would be gained? Nothing whatever. All that helps pupils is to show them that *while*—whether subordinating or coordinating—may be adversative, and so may need a comma before it.

11. *Whereas.* *Whereas* resembles *while* in being a subordinating conjunction that may precede a main clause: *"Whereas* a pinhole has no focus, every lens has a focus." *Whereas* may not be adversative if it precedes the main clause, but may show a reason, as when it introduces the reason for a resolution. But a *whereas* clause that follows the main clause is usually adversative: "A colônel can live in luxury, *whereas* a lieutenant must count his pennies." Such a *whereas* is indistinguishable from a coordinating conjunction.

12. *Else.* This word is not recognized as a conjunction by the dictionaries and is rarely used as a conjunction by pupils. It is perhaps no more of a conjunction than *otherwise.* But it will bear watching. It could easily grow into a conjunction, as this quotation from Browning shows: "Boughs above deform the path, *else* sun would streak." It is not uncommon

to find in modern prose a conjunctional *else* like this of Briffault's: "That there are such standards cannot be disputed, *else* all thought would be equally futile." These sentences might be as significant to a prophet as Lowell's *so* sentences.

The classifying of *only, neither, while, whereas,* and *else* would be of no interest to us who are not prophets if it were not for one consideration: there is authority for using a comma before them; the comma does not cause a sentence-error, as it would before *then* or *however.*

This account of the coordinating conjunctions has run a course from the typical and indubitable *and* to the dubious *else,* which means "otherwise." If it continues one step further, it may be more informing. *Also* is not considered a conjunction by the *Oxford;* it is called a conjunction by the American dictionaries only in an obsolete sense. It is not a true joining word like *and,* but is adverbial, like *too* and *likewise.* It has not become a conjunction that is in general use to join coordinate clauses, but is still classed among the adverbs that require a semicolon. The classification is an arbitrary fact of usage—perhaps illogical, perhaps temporary, not unanimous even now. To reason about *also* is bootless. We must observe how usage moves.

Most modern writers, if they wished to use a coordinate clause containing *else,* would put an *or* at the beginning: "You must prove that you are in earnest, *or else* you cannot hope for a scholarship." *Or* is the conjunction; *else* is now an adverb meaning "otherwise." These combinations of conjunctions with adverbs are frequent: "and so, and yet, but still, but nevertheless, for then, yet now."

We saw in section 2 that an adverb and a conjunction may work together as a team to connect two words, phrases, or clauses. The usual combinations are *either . . . or, neither . . . nor, not only . . . but also, both . . . and.* Such combinations are called in all grammars "correlative conjunctions," and these are included among the coordinating conjunctions.

A true coordinating conjunction may be placed at the beginning of a sentence to connect it with the preceding sentence, but the doubtful conjunctions (*else, whereas, while,* and *only*) are hardly equal to this major duty. There is a notion, widespread among teachers, that the conjunctions ought not to begin a sentence. Whence the notion came is a mystery; for no textbook has ever published the name of an author who does not begin sentences with *and, but,* etc. A coordinating conjunction at the beginning of a sentence is proper—unless all English literature is a mistake.

This detailed discussion of doubtful conjunctions may seem disheartening to a novice teacher. He may wonder how such evasive distinctions can be practically applied in a class of pupils who are ignorant of even the most palpable differences between conjunctions and adverbs. There is no reason for being disheartened. The fine distinctions are not meant for classroom use, but for a teacher's information. The rules for pupils to follow in composition are plain and simple. (See pages 344-345.)

B. Subordinating Conjunctions

Subordinating conjunctions cannot be understood apart from the clauses that they introduce, which are described in Chapter 25. This section is a set of comments, for ready reference, on a list of the conjunctions given in alphabetical order.

A pupil gains only a hazy knowledge of the subordinating conjunctions if he is taught that they join their clauses to the main clause. The fact always is that they join their clauses to some one word in the main clause. The purpose of teaching subordinate clauses is to show how they modify or belong with some one word.

It should be made clear to pupils that a subordinate clause introduced by a conjunction has an independent subject; it might be an independent statement if it were not for the conjunction. The conjunction is what reduces the clause to

a lower rank; it is a "paralyzing word" which destroys the independence of the clause. (See under Pronouns, page 214.)

After usually makes adverb clauses: "came *after* I left, was sorry *after* he learned of it."

Against is only archaic as a conjunction. "Thou shalt stand by the river's brink *against he come.*"

Albeit (meaning "although") is archaic: "*albeit* considerations infinite do make against it."

Although is not distinguished in meaning or use from *though,* except that it is never a parenthetical adverb. See *Though* in this list.

Anywhere and ***everywhere*** are not entered as conjunctions in the dictionaries. Jespersen is amused by this strange unwillingness of the lexicographers and gives many quotations from good sources which show that the words are as much conjunctions as *wherever* is: "live *anywhere they like,* have looked *everywhere I can think of.*"

As requires a vast amount of space in the dictionaries and has a wide variety of almost unclassifiable uses. But it need never be a bugbear in school. As a true conjunction, introducing clauses, it has four meanings: (1) to show time ("as I was mounting the steps"); (2) to show reason ("as I had no money in my pocket"); (3) to introduce a parenthetical remark ("as you know perfectly well; as matters now stand; as I have said before; steep as it is, we can climb it"); (4) to show comparison ("as a man sometimes will in a dream, as you used to do").

It is the comparative use that ramifies endlessly into a tangle of idioms, described in the following lettered paragraphs:

(a) An *as* clause may modify *such, so, same, as:* "*such* faith as I used to have, not *so* hard as you think, acted the *same* as he always did, *as* hard as the stone was."

(b) An *as* clause that refers to *such* or *same* sometimes resembles a relative clause: "These are not the same *as* I have previously bought—or "the same *that* I have previously bought."

But the fact that we can express the idea with a *that* clause does not prove that *as* is a relative. *As* is a conjunction that introduces a clause of comparison; *that* is a relative which is the object of *have bought.*

(c) *As* may be closely joined to *according, inasmuch, in so far,* etc., introducing a clause that modifies a verb: *"Inasmuch as* you have already suffered heavily, no further punishment seems necessary."

(d) An *as* clause may come first and modify a *so* in the main clause: *"As* the ear accustoms itself to any recurrent sound, *so* does the mind safeguard itself against this kind of pendulum discourse."

(e) An *as* clause may indicate similarity, and be an obvious modifier of a verb: "He acted just *as* a frog does when its spinal cord is severed. They yelled and whistled *as* a crowd does at a baseball game."

(f) *As* may link predicates or appositives or modifiers: "During the winter he worked *as* a janitor; we liked him as a coach; she went with us *as* a guide; he acted *as* general manager; they think of America *as* the land of opportunity; the remark was felt *as* an insult; the rug was described *as* a bargain." All such words attached by *as* mean the same person or thing as the word to which they are attached: *he* is not compared to a *janitor,* but was one; *him* is not compared to a *coach,* but was one.

Pupils who have been trained to avoid *like* as a conjunction ("He talked *like* they do on the Bowery") and who have been told to use *as* ("talked *as* they do on the Bowery") come to think that there is something wrong with *like;* they become afraid of *like* as a preposition ("talked *like* a Bowery tough"). Hence, if they are conscientious and ignorant, they produce such ludicrous comparatives as these: "He ran *as* a deer; it looked *as* smoke; a teacher, just *as* a doctor, needs cooperation." The *as* is absurd because it is making a comparison of one thing to another; the comparison should be

made in one of two ways: (1) with the preposition *like,* (2) or with an *as* clause that contains a verb—"just *like* a doctor" or "just *as* a doctor *does.*"

In sentences 12 and 13 the comparison is properly made with the preposition *like; as* without a verb would be uncouth:

12. She slighted their homage, *like* a queen who will not take the trouble to reign.

13. The bouquet of wit, *like* the bouquet of wine, escapes definition.

(g) *As* introduces verbs that have no subject: *"as* often happens, *as* seems best, *as* was seen in the previous chapters." (Compare "as regards," etc., page 331, and the ellipses on page 336.)

(h) *As* introduces prepositional phrases made with *to* and *for: "as to* your third question, *as for* that."

(i) *As* may be combined with *so* to introduce an infinitive that shows purpose: "The moist cement is covered with gravel for a few days, *so as to* prevent cracking." The use of *so as* with a verb ("so as it will prevent") is a vulgarism.

(j) *As* forms a compound conjunction with *if* and *though:* "looks *as if* it might snow, talked *as though* he was going to decline."

Because is an orderly conjunction that introduces an obvious modifier of a verb. Its clause frequently stands as an independent sentence by ellipsis of the main clause; see page 334. It may be combined with *of* to form a compound preposition; see page 261.

Before, like *after,* could be called a preposition that has the clause for its object, but is called a conjunction. (See page 352.)

But. All the many ancient and tangled uses of this word for introducing subordinate clauses can be reduced to one use—as a kind of preposition that has the clause for its object and means something like "except" or "without." Most of its numerous subordinating uses are archaic or seldom occur

in the writing of American pupils. The two uses that prevail in composition are these: (1) to introduce a sort of object clause, as in "I don't know *but you'd better stay at home";* (2) to precede *that* or *what:* "I don't doubt *but that* you will succeed. I don't know *but what* he might." The *what,* even when it refers to persons ("no one *but what* has experienced"), has considerable warrant in literature, but is generally objected to in rhetorics. The *that* is never needed, but has always been an accepted idiom. In "It never rains *but* it pours" the *but* is subordinating and means "except that"—that is, "it never rains *without* pouring." A similar use, with the subject omitted, is in sentences of this type: "There wasn't one of the apples *but* had a worm in it." Of course we could manufacture a corresponding sentence in which *but* is replaced by a relative ("not one *that did not* have"), but this fact does not prove that *but* is a relative. It is a conjunction.

Directly is commonly used as a conjunction by educated people in England: "I turned homeward *directly it began to rain.*" This is not heard in America except as an importation. The same remark holds true of *immediately.*

Ere is archaic and is used like *before.*

Everywhere. See *Anywhere.*

Except. This is archaic or stilted: "I will not go, *except thou bless me.*"

For. See the discussion on page 301.

How. This interrogative adverb becomes a conjunction, forming a noun clause, when it introduces an indirect question: "I don't know *how I can thank you enough.*"

If is the most common of the subordinating conjunctions, and it forms clauses that are most readily felt as downright modifiers. It sometimes has the meaning of "even if": "I am really much better, *if* I do still look pale." There is a prevalent feeling in America that *if* ought not to introduce noun clauses, as in "I don't know *if it has been announced.*" Eng-

lish and American poets have never shared the feeling, and there seems to be no ground for it. Lord David Cecil used it in his *Atlantic* articles on Scott: "No one can make out *if she realizes the occasion or no.*"

Immediately. See *Directly.*

Lest is only archaic or elevated.

Like. There are two different uses of *like* as a conjunction. The first is a substitute for *as:* "Don't act *like* he does." Lowell declared in 1867 that this was never heard in New England but was universal in the South and West. Yet Darwin had used it twenty years earlier in a letter to Hooker: "If these plants have very clear relations to terrestrial vegetables, *like* the ferns have, of course I must give up the ghost." Darwin's speech habits represented the upper stratum of British usage, for they had been schooled at Shrewsbury and Cambridge. Whitney made no mention of *like* as a conjunction in his grammar of 1877, but said in the *Century* (1889), "It occurs not unfrequently in modern writers." Its frequency in England and New England has steadily increased since that time. Whether it will continue to increase is another matter. The embattled textbooks may be victorious over it, but it may go on to victory. Henry Hazlitt used it in *Thinking as a Science* (1916): "A machine to write words just *like* the human hand writes them." T. E. Lawrence, who is a refined stylist, wrote, "Just *like* one might say."

The other use of *like* is as a substitute for *as if:* "It looks *like* it was going to rain." This is hardly to be found in print except to represent the speech of ignorant persons. It remains on a distinctly lower level of usage, and there are few signs that it has risen since 1900. It is put into the mouth of a college sophomore in Percy Marks's *Unwilling God* (1929): "Don't look at me *like* I was a hypocrite."

Notwithstanding is archaic: "notwithstanding I was alone."

Now, when it means "inasmuch as, seeing that, or now that," is a conjunction: "The temptation grew stronger than

ever, *now* the fear of detection was removed; But, oh! the heavy change, *now* thou art gone." *Now* is more commonly combined with *that* when it is subordinating: *"now that* the fear is removed."

Once, like *now* and *directly,* is a good example of how easily adverbs may be converted into conjunctions: *"Once* you have been received at court, you are welcome everywhere."

Save is archaic or stilted; it is usually followed by *that:* "save that there was not time enough to hear."

Since, like *once* and *now,* illustrates how a meaning of time may slip into a meaning of cause:

Since I last wrote to you, there has been a great change.
Since I wrote to you at length yesterday, you will be surprised to hear from me again today.

So as a subordinating conjunction is not yet an accredited word, but appears to be making rapid progress. In careless speech, and increasingly in current journalism, it shows purpose: "They slipped into Santa Claus's house quickly and quietly, *so* no one would see or hear them." (Christopher Morley) The meaning of purpose shades off toward result and is sometimes to be found in the magazines as a close modifier: "He cracked our skulls open *so* there was room for brain expansion." (A. G. Keller)

It is generally felt that *so that* ought to be used for result or purpose; see *that* below. *So that* which shows result is considered coordinating, for it may begin an independent sentence. The *so* which shows result is called a coordinating conjunction; it is described in section A, page 302. "So as," used for *so that* to show purpose, is a sheer vulgarism ("They wore masks *so as* they wouldn't be recognized").

Than introduces clauses that modify an adjective or an adverb which is in the comparative degree: "The price was *higher than* I was willing to pay. We were going *faster than* I thought." *Than* is not uncommonly used, even by respectable authors, after *different;* it is used still more commonly

after *differently,* for a noun clause with *what* is cumbersome. ("Women were treated very differently then *than* they are now.") But the *than* clauses are called improprieties by the textbooks. *Than* clauses are usually highly elliptical, the subject and verb not being expressed. For the constructions after *than* see Ellipses, page 335.

That has two principal uses in modern English: (1) It introduces noun clauses: "I know *that it is true.* It seems *that he hadn't read the book.*" (2) It joins a clause of comparison to *so* and *such:* "It was *so* heavy *that we couldn't lift it.* There was *such* a hubbub *that I couldn't hear.*" Somewhat related to this comparative use is such a clause as "Who am I *that I should presume to criticize him?*" There is an implicit comparison, as if "Am I *such* a person *that I should?*"

In a formal or somewhat antiquated style *that* may show purpose: "I am come *that* ye might have life."

An exasperating bit of syntax is a *that* clause which modifies a noun that shows time: "the moment *that he arrived,* the day *that I was born,* the hour *that,*" etc. In these clauses *that* is, historically, a relative pronoun. What is its construction? It can be explained as an adverbial objective, and is so explained by Onions; but this seems far-fetched and imaginary. The relative is doubtless "floating," carelessly left without construction (see page 218); to supply words that will explain a construction is often impossible without inventing idioms which never existed. Hence there can be no objection to calling *that* a conjunction. Poutsma declares that it must be called a conjunction.

That has always been used for linking clauses to a preposition or adverb or conjunction: "before that, since that, while that, because that." In parts of northern New England "where that" and "when that" are still heard in common speech. The tendency has been to use *that* with an adverb—"immediately that, once that"—and then to discard *that.* When the

dictionaries explain *directly* or *now* as conjunctions, they say, "By the omission of *that.*" *That* always tends to grow obsolete. A recent example is "once that"; within this generation *that* has died out and left *once* as the conjunction. It still sounds natural to say "anywhere that," and "everywhere that," but *that* will probably disappear as it has disappeared from all similar combinations with adverbs. *That* has hardly begun to die in "now that." Older people continue to favor "so that," but younger people already feel an antiquity about *that* and prefer plain *so*. It is probable that "considering that" and "seeing that" will be obsolete some day; then these participial prepositions may come to be regarded as conjunctions.

There is a strong tendency, shown not infrequently in literature, to repeat *that* if modifiers intervene between it and its clause: "Sir Arthur argues *that* because the world may appear beautiful to us *that* the beauty has an objective reality." The second *that* has been defended because it may give added clarity, but it should be ruled out from school composition.

The is a form of *that* which appears in comparisons: "*The* longer I thought about it, *the* more frightened I became." In this sentence the first clause modifies the *more* in the second clause—"more frightened in proportion as I thought about it more."

Though is so independent in meaning that it hardly seems to join a modifying clause, but it is called subordinating: "*Though we have had a good deal of rain,* the ground remains dry." The *though* clause is a kind of modifier of the verb in the main clause, as if the sentence were "The ground remains dry in spite of the rain." (Note that *though* may be a parenthetical adverb: "It is curious, *though,* how tyrannical the habit of reading is.")

Till is not distinguished in meaning from *until.* There is a very general notion that it is a less refined word than *until,* or that it is an abbreviation of *until* and ought to be

written *'till;* but there is no basis for the notions. Both words join clauses of time to a verb in the main clause.

Unless was once a preposition that took a *that* clause for its object: *"unless that* better days come." The *that* disappeared and left *unless* as a conjunction.

Until. See *Till.*

When has four uses. (1) It joins an adverb clause of time that modifies a verb in the main clause. This meaning of time may shade off to an almost adversative meaning (as it does with *while*): "I was giving a tenth of my income, *when* he wasn't giving a tenth of one per cent of his." (2) The interrogative *when* may form a noun clause, an indirect question: "I can't tell *when it was posted.*" (3) It may form an adjective clause: "The hour *when the congestion is greatest.*" (4) It adds a clause which cannot, by any stretch of make-believe, be thought of as modifying a verb: "The Spanish commander retreated down the slope of the hill, still defending himself as he could with sword and buckler, *when* his foot slipped and he fell." The *when* clause does not mean that "he retreated when he fell," but that he retreated, *and then* fell. The *when* clause is as coordinate in meaning as any clause that could be added by *and.* But in form it is subordinate, and all grammars call it so. This "additive" *when* is sanctioned by ancient and prevalent usage, but it is never an ornament of style and is a nuisance in school composition.

Whenever and ***whensoever*** form only adverb clauses.

Whence usually forms adjective clauses: "The bog *whence the brook issued.*" *Whence* is frequently combined with *from:* "This is the assumption *from whence so much false reasoning springs.*" The interrogative *whence* may form a noun clause: "Who can imagine *whence the idea originated?*"

Where has the same four uses as *when:* (1) "Shrewsbury was built *where* the river made a loop." (2) "I don't know *where* I ought to look." (3) "Go first to the corner *where*

the bus stops." (4) The additive *where* is never so independent as the additive *when,* and can always be conceived as a modifier: "The wreck was near Point Concepcion, *where* the coast turns northward."

Where is compounded with many prepositions to form conjunctions that usually join adjective clauses. Many of these are obsolete, but the following may be met occasionally in exercise material: *whereafter, whereat, whereby, wherein, whereof, whereupon, wherewith.*

Whereas is discussed in section A, page 304.

Wherever and ***wheresoever*** form only adverb clauses.

Whether was once an interrogative, and still makes indirect questions that appear as noun clauses: "We couldn't make out *whether she was angry or not.*" *Whether* also forms adverb clauses with the meaning of "whichever it may be, no matter which": "The scandalous story will be ruinous, *whether it is true or not.*"

While (also *whilst*) forms adverb clauses that show time or concession: "*While* we stood there, the militia raced by. *While* this report may be false, still it is widely believed." The adversative meaning of *while* is discussed in section A, page 304.

Whither forms adverb, adjective, and noun clauses that correspond with *where* clauses. *Whithersoever* forms only adverb clauses.

Why introduces indirect questions that are noun clauses: "He never revealed *why he wanted to know.*"

Without (or *without that*) had a long career as a conjunction. Tennyson wrote, "Not *without* she wills it." But this conjunction is now disreputable.

Many subordinating conjunctions are used elliptically, without an expressed subject or verb: "*while* watching, *as if* suspecting, *when* angry." (See Ellipses, page 334.)

The phrases *in order, in case,* and *for fear* are used as conjunctions that join adverb clauses; see page 354.

Discussion of the Meaning of "Conjunction"

There are two ways in which words connect coordinate clauses: (1) They may show how the second statement is logically related to the first—for example:

1. Roger Williams did not accept the condition imposed by the court; *consequently* a sentence of banishment was passed upon him.
2. I have received no such message; *indeed* I have strong proof that it was never sent.

In sentence 1 the connective means "as a result of his failure to accept"; in sentence 2 the connective means "as a matter of fact, the statement can be made more strongly." These words that thus show in what logical way a statement is related to a preceding statement are called adverbs by all dictionaries. They are regarded as modifiers of the verbs in their clauses, as words that emphasize the meanings of those verbs. They are connectives only in the sense that they show the sequence of thought.

(2) Words may be mere joiners in a grammatical way—that is, they may link two coordinate clauses in the same way that *and* links two words or phrases. If a word comes to be regarded as a mere joiner of this sort, it is listed by all dictionaries as a coordinating conjunction.

The difference between adverbs and conjunctions is therefore indefinite. Grammarians have registered their judgments or expressed opinions; but they have never made any concerted effort to establish a criterion by which opinions may be tested. The situation is comical, incredible. But there it is. Until the scholars unite on a definition of "connect" as applied to conjunctions, we shall never know what a conjunction is.

The Discussion of adverbs in Chapter 20 shows, however, that the dictionaries are fairly well agreed in their verdicts as to what words are coordinating conjunctions. If we start with the classification given in the *Oxford,* we shall be able to adopt a definition that will fit the facts of modern usage: *A coordinating conjunction is a word that is very commonly used, without a semicolon or a period, in scrupulously punctuated matter, to join independent clauses.* Any definition that is more precise will not fit the facts of present usage. The student who guides himself by this definition will find that it is specific enough to give him a clear concept.

The status of a word as a conjunction cannot be determined by its use at the beginning of a sentence or after a semicolon. The unquestioned conjunctions like *and* and *but* may be used in those positions, or unquestioned adverbs like *accordingly* may be used in those positions. It is also to be noted that adverbs may look like conjunctions after a comma when the structure of the sentence shows that they are not conjunctions—for example: "And if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, *yet* is their strength labor and sorrow." The *yet* is not joining two coordinate clauses, but is an adverb (meaning "none the less") that is preceded by a subordinate *if* clause. The test is limited to connectives between coordinate clauses.

Apply the test to *and* and *but*. Everywhere there is an abundance of sentences in which these words join independent clauses without any semicolon or period before them; indeed they are often used without even a comma—so obviously are they true conjunctions. But apply the test to *however*. If we conduct a long search through the best periodicals and carefully published books, we may occasionally come upon sentences in which *however* is used with a comma between two short clauses—thus: "The remark was rude, however it was well meant." But the comma before *however* is highly exceptional; it is hardly to be found in books of reference; it is called erroneous by publishers' style-cards. Therefore the conclusion is that *however* is not generally used as a conjunction.

It is easier to gather examples of *nevertheless* and *therefore* with the comma: "We are saddened, nevertheless we are not hopeless. Someone had to go, therefore I volunteered." Yet even between such short clauses the semicolon is the usual mark; manuals of punctuation almost unanimously advise a semicolon or a period; almost all freshman instructors in the universities insist on the semicolon or the period. It thus appears that the words are adverbs, not true grammatical conjunctions.

It is much easier to find sentences, written by careful authors and published carefully, in which *still* is used with a comma: "Much of the essay is rubbish, still it is worth reading." Yet even these are in a small minority, and textbooks of composition give hardly any warrant for the comma. We may then suspect

that *still* is growing into a conjunction; but we realize that it has not yet grown far, that perhaps it will never grow much farther.

There is no sharp line of demarcation between conjunctions and adverbs. All depends on usage, and usage may be fluctuant, may be obscure, or may be moving swiftly in the direction that we think is wrong. The status of a conjunction may not alter for centuries, or it may be completely altered in twenty years. Just as *due to* was not a compound preposition in 1900, but was in 1930, so *still* or *therefore* may assume new roles during the twentieth century. A word is not a conjunction by any enduring law of philology, but only by virtue of a usage that may be indeterminate in any given decade.

In all cases of variant usage the scholar can stand apart and await the outcome. The practical teacher has to make a decision to guide his work. He will not decide as a matter of dogmatism, but purely as a matter of giving pupils the most useful instruction. His rulings should be of this sort: "Our school requirement is that a comma must not be used with *still, however,* and *nevertheless.* If you use commas with them, you are likely to be considered ignorant. When you are graduated from school, or when usage changes, you may do as you think best."

CHAPTER 24

PARENTHESES AND ELLIPSES

The four sections of this chapter describe three elements of sentences that are more subtle than mere syntax, that are difficult to teach in a high-school course, but that a pupil must understand to some extent before he can learn to punctuate: parenthetical modifiers, true parentheses, ellipses.

A. Parenthetical Modifiers

A word which modifies closely is called a restrictive modifier: "the *disconsolate* boys, will *probably* fail, anyone *approaching* the station." Adjectives in the attributive or the predicate position are almost always restrictive modifiers, because they are united in meaning with their nouns or pronouns and limit them closely. A restrictive adjective is spoken without a pause; in the language of the classroom, it "runs along solid" with the word it modifies.

But an adjective that is set alongside a word appositively, separated from it by commas or dashes, is not restrictive; it is added as a kind of side-remark; it is spoken with a pause and does not limit the meaning closely: "The three boys, *disconsolate and nervous,* were now ready to return." The writer could have said, "The three disconsolate and nervous boys," using a restrictive modifier; but he chose to give a different emphasis by making the adjectives non-restrictive.

A participle may, without any change of construction, be used either restrictively or non-restrictively: (1) "A man *clinging* to a piece of driftwood called for help. (2) Marcus, *clinging* to a piece of driftwood, felt that he was in no danger of drowning." The participle in the first sentence is necessary to the sense; if it were taken away, there would be only a grammatical skeleton left—"A man called for help." But the

participle in the second sentence is a bit of information that is added as a side-remark to describe Marcus's reason for confidence. A writer shows by using or not using commas which sort of meaning his participles have.

An adverb may be written without commas to show that it modifies closely: "This was *indeed* a lucky accident." Or the same sentence could be written with commas if a writer wished to show that the adverb was not restricting the meaning: "This was, *indeed,* a lucky accident." The adverb does not have one meaning or the other; a writer gives it a meaning by using or not using commas. None of the modal adverbs (*possibly, perhaps, nevertheless,* etc.) has a non-restrictive meaning; the writer has to show by his punctuation what meaning he is giving to an adverb. But *however,* when used modally, is almost necessarily non-restrictive.

A modifying infinitive is usually restrictive: "I leaned over *to get* a closer view." But if the writer wanted to show that an infinitive was a side-remark of added comment, he would use a comma or a dash: "Then I deliberately leaned far over the broken rail—*just to show* that I was not afraid."

A few prepositional phrases are so regularly non-restrictive in meaning that pupils may safely be taught to set them off with commas: *in fact, after all, at all events, by the way, in the first place, on the other hand.* But most phrases may be either restrictive or non-restrictive: *of course, at last, by all means, before long, in some way or other, on no account, in spite of this, without exception.* There is a strong tendency among pupils (and teachers) to set off phrases that begin a sentence; the phrases should not be set off unless the writer wishes to show that they are non-restrictive in meaning.

Non-restrictive words are commonly called "parenthetical," a term which means that the words are so detached in meaning that they might be enclosed within marks of parenthesis. The term is so firmly established that textbooks must continue to employ it, but there are two objections to it for teaching purposes: (1) it is over-emphatic, since the words

could seldom be put in parentheses; (2) it does not distinguish betwen modifiers and true parentheses (described in section B) which are not modifiers. The objections apply with special force to non-restrictive clauses, which are real modifiers and are entirely different in syntax from truly parenthetical clauses. For these reasons "non-restrictive" is used throughout section A.

Non-restrictive relative clauses have the meaning of "and I will say by the way." The best approach to them for classroom purposes is to teach that most relative clauses are restrictive, but that one which means "and I will add" should be set off by commas. If a teacher makes the other approach—emphasizing the distinction between the two kinds, saying that restrictive clauses must not have commas and that non-restrictive clauses must have commas—he involves pupils in a maze of "commas if it is not and no commas if it is." The attention of pupils should not be focused on the maze, but on the one requirement: "Use commas for a clause that means 'and I will add.'"

The device which is most effective for detecting a non-restrictive clause is to experiment by putting "that particular" before the antecedent: "the chair *that he liked best,* the girl *who got most votes,* the snow *which fell on the north side of the house.*" The clauses are distinguishing the chair, the girl, the snow from the other chairs, the other girls, the rest of the snow; they mean that particular chair which, that particular girl who, that particular snow which. But if only one person or thing is being spoken of, the "that particular" test makes nonsense. If, for example, a theme is telling about a magician who was performing before an audience, it would be senseless to speak of "the magician who was now becoming flustered"; for this *who* clause would mean "that particular magician, as distinguished from all the other magicians in the theater." If there is only one magician, the clause is adding some information about him and is non-

restrictive. It must be set off by commas. The clue for some restrictive clauses is "that particular kind of": "a man who has confidence in himself, a tire which is nearly worn out." If any relative clause does not have the meaning of "that particular," it is non-restrictive and must be set off. The most usual kind of non-restrictive clause is one that refers to a proper noun: we do not speak of "that particular San Francisco" or "that particular Wall Street" or "that particular George Y. Murchison." Clauses that modify proper nouns are nearly always non-restrictive. (This same test applies to participles which modify proper nouns.)

Adjective clauses that are not made with relatives may be tested in the same way. It is not sensible to speak of "the New Orleans where" or "the Norman Conquest when," because we do not mean that particular New Orleans or that particular Conquest as distinguished from others.

Adverb clauses are restrictive if they mean "for this particular reason, at that particular time or place, under this particular condition": "He stopped because he was tired; they stopped when the whistle blew; she stooped where the cool spring bubbled up; I should wait if I were you." But any adverb clause that means "and I will add the reason, time," etc., is non-restrictive: "I couldn't wait, because I had another engagement; we have recitations till 10:15, when there is a quarter-hour recess." The distinction between a restrictive and a non-restrictive adverb clause is sometimes subtle, especially when the conjunction is *because.* Whenever a pupil can argue for his punctuation with a show of plausibility, he should be allowed to have his way. The pupil who can argue will seldom go far wrong. The pupil who needs attention is the one who is merely careless.

When *as, for,* and *since* show a reason, they are to be regarded as non-restrictive in theme-writing. If some authors choose to regard these conjunctions as occasionally restrictive, that is their privilege; pupils will not profit by such a privilege.

Since the term "restrictive" applies to modifiers, it cannot, technically, be used for noun clauses; but pupils are helped by a teacher who speaks of noun clauses as nearly always restrictive. Clauses that are subjects or objects should not be set off by commas. Even noun clauses in apposition should not be set off unless a writer wants to give the effect of "namely," as in the following sentence: "The old miser was obsessed by one fixed idea—that every visitor was hoping to be remembered in his will."

B. True Parentheses

A parenthesis can best be understood by observing the following series of italicized expressions:

1. A reply will *probably* come soon.
2. A reply will, *in all probability,* come soon.
3. A reply will—*as you are doubtless aware*—come soon.
4. A reply—*you need have no doubt of this*—will come soon.

In sentence 1 *probably* is a close modifier of *will come.* In sentence 2 the phrase set off by commas is also a modifier; the writer shows by the commas that the modifier is not closely restrictive in meaning. In sentence 3 the *as* clause, though very detached, is still a sort of modifier of *will come.* But in sentence 4 the writer goes beyond the bounds of modifying; he steps outside the syntax to write a separate sentence, and then returns to complete the syntax of the sentence that he had begun to make. "You need have no doubt of this" is a sheer parenthesis, something that is *slipped in alongside,* as the Greeks described it.

A parenthesis may be enclosed between a pair of curves, called "marks of parenthesis," or simply "parentheses." More often nowadays a parenthesis is set off by dashes, which indicate greater liveliness and interest; parentheses are more used for mere information. Commas may be used, but they are poor marks for a long or very disconnected parenthesis, since they fail to forewarn a reader of the violence of the interrup-

tion. A few examples of the more abrupt and conspicuous parentheses are as follows:

5. But this one with the green-dragon handle—she paused and looked hard at the wily merchant—is shopworn.
6. Theodore had been a failure in three colleges—his social ambition had been too great for study—and he was now humbly beginning in a fourth college.
7. I bought some over-ripe pears—there were no hard ones in the shop—and hurried home.
8. Not only can we date our graves accurately (King Sargon reigned from 2630 to 2575 B. C.), but we can read vivid details of the glory of Ur.
9. Balanoglossus is a worm-like creature—the length varies in different species from an inch to three yards—that spends its life burrowing in mud at the bottom of shallow seas.
10. No eyes can produce light (even a cat's eyes do not shine in a photographer's dark-room), and eyes that shine in the dark are simply reflecting what scanty light there is.

It is unfortunate that there is no term which describes these completely detached parentheses and distinguishes them from the non-restrictive modifiers that are set off by commas or dashes and called "parenthetical." For the difference is not a matter of technical definition. It is a deep difference in the structure of sentences; if it is not understood, syntax will be a blur. True parentheses might be called "intrusive," to show how they are unlike the non-restrictive modifiers or objects or appositives that are shown in the following sentences:

11. Indeed there is just one thing wrong about such an expense—that so much of the money is wasted.
12. Below these headlines was a single cross-line, then a double cross-line (both of them common in the heads of thirty years ago) and finally a symmetrical bank in small type.
13. Sensible people recognize that federal aid must be exactly what its name implies—that is, the helping out of states when local communities have done all they can.
14. There are other violin-makers—though I can't recall their names at this moment—who were equally famous in their day.

15. Your boys have been working under conditions more nearly approximating graduate work—or at least upper-class work in hour courses—than undergraduate work.

In sentence 11 the dashed-off words are a noun clause in apposition with *thing;* in sentence 12 *both* is in apposition with the two *cross-lines;* in sentence 13 *helping out* is in apposition with *aid;* in sentence 14 the dashed-off words are an adverb clause modifying *are;* in sentence 15 *work* is a second object of *approximating.* In most modern prose the great majority of the word-groups that are set off by commas, dashes, or curves are integral parts of the syntax—not true disconnected parentheses.

Some abruptly-inserted word-groups are debatable; the *though* clause in sentence 14 could be called a parenthesis, just as if it began with *but.* There is no need of stickling for the definition or of debating possibilities.

Some parentheses are mere imperative verbs or elliptical infinitives.

16. Collect in this area for, *say,* thirty minutes.
17. I haven't the courage—*let* alone the desire—to investigate.
18. You are hardly qualified—*to speak* frankly—for such a delicate mission.
19. One reason—*not to mention* half a dozen others—is that the boys are becoming distrustful.

Exclamatory words may be parentheses.

20. Some of us, alas, are less fortunate.
21. Not one mark—what a commentary on her method!—was below B.

This section is not concerned with such obvious interjected words and phrases as those shown in sentences 16-21. The purpose of this section is to show the difference between non-restrictive modifiers and the intruded, non-modifying parentheses. A non-restrictive adjective or adverb or verbal or phrase—however detached in meaning it may be—is a part of the structure of the sentence. An appositive group of words or a non-restrictive clause is a part of the structure.

Even a nominative absolute may often fit in as a sort of modifier of a verb. But the typical and usual intruded parenthesis is, or is equivalent to, an independent sentence that has no syntactical connection with the sentence into which it is thrust.

Parentheses that are short, conventional expressions, which slip easily into the current of a sentence, are often set off by commas.

22. Gregory, *it will be remembered,* had never seen her.
23. Some of you, *I feel sure,* will wish to give more.
24. There are now, *it seems,* some new misunderstandings.

Other common parentheses of this sort are: "I think, it now appears, you may be sure, you will recall, they say, we are told."

Some parentheses are slipped into relative clauses.

25. Carson was a man who, *I was confident,* could restore discipline.

Some of these customary little side-remarks are not even set off by commas.

26. Carson was a man who *we thought* could restore order.

Such parentheses often cause a false objective of the relative pronoun, because the relative seems to be an object of the verb in the parenthesis.

Parentheses in direct and indirect questions are sometimes impossible to analyze surely, because they may be indistinguishable from a main clause. In the next sentence, for example, it seems certain that *do you think* is parenthetical.

27. Who *do you think* will be there?

For the question is "Who will be there?" and this question stands in its normal word-order when the parenthesis is removed. But compare this with sentence 28.

28. When *do you think* he will come?

If we take out *do you think,* we have left "When he will come?"—an inverted word-order, not a question. We are

therefore tempted to say that *do you think* may be a main clause and *when he will come* a noun clause, the object of *do think*. This explanation seems unavoidable if we put in a conjunction: "When do you think *that* he will come?" Now the real question is perverted, for the real question surely was "When will he come?" But we cannot deny the syntax of the *that* clause: it must be an object; *do you think* has been turned into the main clause.

A similar brain-whirling alteration can be made in "Who do you think he is?" The real question is "Who is he?"; *do you think* is parenthetical. But put in a *that:* "Who do you think *that* he is?" We now have a noun clause—"that he is who"—which is the object of *do think*. In either case *who* is a predicate after *is*.

These queer whirligigs of clauses are not discussed here because teachers ought to make a study of them, but because teachers will be happier and more useful to pupils if they understand how baffling an occasional bit of syntax may be. If they understand, they can keep a cheerful composure. They will know that nine times out of ten the clue to this kind of tangle is a parenthetical clause which, if lifted out of the sentence, leaves the true syntax clearly displayed.

For parenthetical *what* clauses see page 356.

C. True Ellipses

Ellipsis is the omission of words that are easily understood, that are not necessary to express the meaning, but that are necessary for grammatical completeness. In the following sentence, for example, there are three infinitives; *to* is easily understood with the second and third, is not necessary for expressing the meaning, but is necessary for full grammatical analysis, since there is no such idiom as "expected take a swim."

29. He expected to finish by noon, [to] take a swim, and [to] drive to Weymouth.

The relative *that* is often omitted (as shown on page 217).

30. This was just the kind of farm [that] he had always wanted.

The relative is not necessary for expressing the meaning, because we are used to the ellipsis of *that;* but the clause cannot be analyzed grammatically until the relative is supplied.

The conjunction *that* is often omitted from noun clauses, and perhaps is not necessary to grammatical completeness; but it is customary to say that there is an ellipsis of *that* in the following sentence:

31. Mr. Britten declared [that] he was quite satisfied.

The noun that belongs after a possessive may be omitted because it is readily understood; the needless repetition might be unpleasant.

32. My seat was fifty feet nearer the ring than Lee's [seat was].
33. Lee's [seat] was a better seat than mine.
34. Wilson's [life] was an exciting life.
35. This is Sarah's theme, and that is Lloyd's [theme].
36. I like your plan, but I don't understand Miss Creel's [plan].

Some ellipses after possessives have become so customary that we are hardly conscious of them: "at the grocer's [shop], at the barber's [shop], at the doctor's [office], at the Joneses' [house]." But there is not always an ellipsis when no noun is expressed after a possessive. In "We laughed at this fad of Henry's" there is no ellipsis, for there is no word that can be supplied. There is no such idiom as "this fad of Henry's fads" or "that queer trick of his tricks."

Nouns may be omitted to avoid unpleasant repetitions.

37. I stood on one side, and Frances on the other [side].

An infinitive may be omitted because it is readily understood from a previous infinitive or verb.

38. I offered to go because I thought I ought to [go].
39. You may remain here if you wish to [remain].

40. I haven't received an invitation, and I don't expect to [receive an invitation].

By strict rhetorical standards there ought not to be an ellipsis like *receive,* which has to be understood from the preceding *received.* Compare the similar ellipsis in the next sentence.

41. I might have declined, but didn't [decline].

The formal requirement for an ellipsis is that the omitted words should be identical with the expressed words. Many authors would decline to follow the rule for fear of sounding prim or verbose. For example, J. L. Lowes wrote: "Eclipse and emergence in art *go* on incessantly, and always have [gone on]."

The ellipses described above are not of much significance in composition. The important ones are the omissions of subjects and verbs.

The only common ellipsis of a subject is the *you* of imperatives.

42. [You] Look at the other corner.

The subject of *please* is so regularly omitted, and the idiom is so different from an imperative, that the ellipsis can be supplied only clumsily.

43. [May you] Please to show me another one. (Originally "May it please you to show me another one.")

The subject is often omitted before *thank.*

44. No, [I] thank you.

Probably the subject and the conjunction of a subordinate clause are omitted in sentences like the following:

45. [Now that I] Come to think of it, I believe I did meet him.

When *would* expresses a prayerful wish, its subject may be omitted.

46. [I] Would that he were living now.

But the subject is usually not felt as *I* or as any other definite word.

There are several verbs, used impersonally after *as,* which have no subject, and for which no subject can be supplied: "as *regards* your application, as *concerns* the broadcasting stations, as *respects,* as *follows.*"

The ellipsis of verbs is common.

47. Some are showy, some [are] inconspicuous.
48. One has been lost, another [has been] discarded.
49. Why [should there be] all the excitement?

It would be natural to say that in the next sentence there is an ellipsis of the verb and its object.

50. I will help him, and [will help him] very gladly, if his record is good.

But the speaker probably had no thought of a second verb; he merely put in parenthetically a modifier of the verb; there is probably no genuine ellipsis.

Verbs are frequently omitted after *as* and *than;* see page 335.

The following sentences illustrate various ellipses of verbs, and of the expletives that belong with them:

51. Hence [there is or arises] the need of increasing the taxes.
52. [There is] No need for discouragement, however.
53. Whatever the cost [is or may be], we must have the house painted.
54. Can the fig tree bear olives, or [can] a vine [bear] figs?
55. What more natural conclusion [can there be] than that such a stratum belongs to the same age?
56. What [should you say] if I read you some poetry?
57. What [will happen] if he refuses?
58. The office should seek the man, not the man [should seek] the office.
59. Satisfaction [is] guaranteed, or your money [will be given] back.
60. The more effective the dominant power [is], the greater [is] the opposition which it invites.
61. [It is] Fun to practice that way—pretending he was listening.

62. [It was] No wonder [that] he became ill.
63. We must have it, [it is] no matter at what price.
64. What [is there] to do?
65. [There is] Every reason in the world, my dear comrade.
66. Any honest man, however strong the temptation [might be], would reject the offer.
67. [Is] Nobody at home?

The most common and most important ellipsis is that of the subject (or grammatical subject) and verb.

68. [You be] Steady now!
69. [That is] All right; I'm willing.
70. [It is] No wonder [that] you were mystified.
71. Why [do you] not go now?

Exclamatory sentences would often lose their vigor and point if the subjects and verbs were expressed; hence the sentences are often reduced to one or two of the significant words by ellipsis of the subject and verb.

72. [That is] Fine!
73. [You are] Wrong again!
74. [That is] Incredible!
75. How strange [that is]!
76. Look! [There is] A mirage!
77. [Did you say that there is] A rainbow?

When we deal with these exclamatory words, we are beyond the bounds of strict ellipsis, because there is no way to tell just what words have been omitted. If we are to explain the syntax of exclamations, all we can do is to supply such words as could naturally be used in a grammatical sentence. We cannot assert that these are the words which the author had in mind, since it would usually be true that the author was not thinking of specific words. Hence there need not be any attempt to state exactly what the ellipsis is.

"Why then," one might well ask, "should we bring up such matters in school?" The answer is that unless a pupil understands that there is some sort of ellipsis, he does not know what a sentence is. These elliptical remnants of sen-

tences are frequent in all literature and are used by good school writers to enliven their compositions. They must be punctuated as sentences. The pupil who does not understand ellipsis will write thus: "No trouble at all, we can stop for you just as well as not." He sees only one verb; he knows no reason why he should use a semicolon or a period before *we*. The knowledge of ellipses is a rudimentary necessity for pupils who are learning how to avoid the kind of sentence-error that is called a comma blunder.

Lively dialog in themes may contain all sorts of exclamatory words and phrases that are the equivalents of sentences and must be so punctuated, especially in divided quotations.

78. "All aboard!" bawled the conductor. "No time to buy any more postcards."
79. "Farther up and to your left!" shouted Willis. "No, not quite so high."
80. "That!" exclaimed Mrs. Young. "Why, no, of course not."
81. "She! She was never on a tennis court!"

When we see sentences 78-81 detached from context, we cannot tell what the ellipses are. But if we knew the preceding sentences, we could supply approximately what the speakers had in mind—something like "[Did you suppose I meant you to throw] That [away]!" "[Are you expecting me to believe that] She [is a good tennis player]!" Whatever the understood words may be, the pronouns represent complete questions and must be so punctuated.

Questions are often highly elliptical.

82. [Is there] No reply yet?
83. Which coat [shall I wear]?
84. [Are you] Still harping on that?

The subject and verb are often omitted in adverb clauses: "if [that is] so, if [it would be] convenient, though [it was] small, however trifling [it may be], unless [it is] covered at night, whether [it is] right or wrong, as though [he was] quite oblivious of it." This form of ellipsis is frequent with

participles that represent part of a verb, or with phrases: "while [I was] shopping, when [you are] serving to the left court, although [he was] not crediting this, if [you are] in doubt, once [he is] in office, until [they are] about seven weeks old."

The subject and verb may be omitted in parenthetical clauses or in relative clauses.

85. [What is] Better yet, they are all enthusiastic.
86. [What is] Worse still, the stone is not durable.
87. Next day we came upon a new colony [which was] not yet very numerous.

Replies to questions or statements may be reduced to a word or two, or to a subordinate clause.

88. I confess this seems to me like madness. [That is] Exactly [true].
89. Am I in your way? [You are] Not at all [in my way].
90. Ought I to accept? [You] Certainly [ought] not [to accept].
91. Why do you oppose me? [I oppose you] Because I feel sure you are wrong.

There may be an ellipsis of an entire main clause in exclamatory sentences.

92. Oh, [I would] That I had the wings of a dove!
93. What a tragedy [it was]!
94. [ ] That it should come to this!
95. If only he had [ ]!

The writers of sentences 94 and 95 did not think of any particular words that they were omitting, but their hearers could easily supply the idea that was implied.

Parenthetical infinitives are used without any expressed verbs on which they depend.

96. Oh, *to be* in England!
97. *To think* that such good fortune should come in his old age!
98. *To pass* now to the other extreme, to the border line of normal functioning.

99. *To take* up, next, two or three instances of counter-selection.

The effort to supply the words omitted from sentences 96-99 would be fanciful and would result in main clauses that the authors might not recognize nor sanction.

Ellipses after *than* are commonly a verb, or a verb and its subject.

100. His wife is taller than he [is tall].
101. She has praised you oftener than [she has praised] me.

The case of a pronoun after *than* is determined by the ellipsis. It is objective only when an omitted verb or preposition requires the object; it is usually nominative. The one exception to this rule is "than whom"; *whom* is used in this stilted locution even if it is the subject of a verb—thus:

102. I refer to Einstein, *than whom* there is no greater mathematician (that is, "no greater than whom is great").

In the next sentence *us* is used because it is the object of the understood *of*.

103. She was thinking *of* the Edgehill people rather than [she was thinking of] us.

But in sentence 104 *we* is used because it is the subject of an understood *are*.

104. This was the work of better men than we [are].

Than clauses often contain no subject, and it may be impossible to supply an idiomatic subject.

105. There are more accidents *than are reported*.
106. Less has been accomplished *than is claimed*.
107. I shall burn this box of letters, *rather than let them come into unfriendly hands*. (*Let* and *come* are infinitives; there is neither subject nor verb in the clause. We might guess at "I will" as the ellipsis, but this is make-believe.)

Constructions after the comparative *as* are governed in the same way as the constructions after *than*.

108. Stacy is quite as clumsy as I [am clumsy].

109. He trusts you as completely as [he trusts] me.

It is often impossible to supply a subject in *as* clauses.

110. I have told you as much *as is known.*
111. The enthusiasm was not so great *as was expected.*

The ellipses after *as* and *than* are legitimate, and even necessary, to explain the cases of personal pronouns; they are convenient for explaining the constructions of nouns, infinitives, parts of verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and phrases that show comparison, as in the following sentences:

112. He is as mad as a March hare [is mad].
113. It is as easy to keep on as [to] go back [would be easy].
114. We will do as well as we can [do].
115. They are just as fresh as ever [they were].
116. Everything goes on as [is] usual.
117. Credit is easier now than [it was] formerly.
118. He was as calm in an emergency as [he was] in a time when no action was required.
119. Eggs are cheaper now than [they were] last winter.

But teachers should bear in mind that the ellipses are, after all, largely imaginary—not thought of by writers, often caricatures of any normal idioms that would actually be used by speakers or authors.

D. Needless or False Explanations of Ellipses

It should be clearly understood in every grammar class that a true ellipsis is an omission of words that can be unmistakably supplied, that *must* be supplied before the constructions of certain words can be explained. *An ellipsis should not be an invention.* Suppose, for example, that a bright pupil is wrestling with this sentence: "Do you know where I can buy some fly-paper?" He could invent—as bright pupils are fond of inventing—an ellipsis: "Do you know *of any place* where I can buy." The sentence could be written so. But it was written otherwise; there is no necessity of supplying the *of* phrase for explaining the *where* clause, since the

clause is the object of *do know*. It is not likely that the writer of the sentence thought of *place* or of an adjective *where* clause that modified it; probably he would laugh at this fancy of the pupil's and would deny the ellipsis—which is mere needless, false invention. There is no estimating the amount of misconception that can be bred in a pupil's mind if he is encouraged to manufacture new constructions, to inject them into sentences, and so to transform and vitiate the sentences. A true ellipsis does not alter a sentence. When it is supplied, it furnishes the only conceivable syntax of the sentence as the author wrote it.

Another illustration will help to show the nature of a falsely-invented ellipsis: "Mr. Arvin, hesitating on the doorstep, caught sight of me." The thought might be expressed with a clause: Mr. Arvin, *while he was* hesitating." But this is a quite different sentence. We are not at liberty to fabricate a sentence of our own and then discuss it as if it were the author's sentence. The author used a participle; in his sentence this participle modifies *Mr. Arvin* directly; it is not part of a verb in an adverb clause.

Now suppose that the author had written thus: "Mr. Arvin, while hesitating, caught sight of me." All grammars unite in saying that the sentence is elliptical, and for this reason: The word *while* is almost always used to join a clause; there is no precedent for asserting that *while* joins a participle to the word it modifies; the *while* inevitably suggests an ellipsis of *he was*. If a teacher chose to argue otherwise—to tell a class not to supply words, but to explain that *while* joins a participle—he would be doing well in one way: he would be discouraging needless and false ellipses. The same remarks apply to the modifier of *colony* in sentence 87, "not yet very numerous." The adverbs *not* and *yet* inevitably suggest that they are modifying some understood verb; we cannot otherwise explain their construction; hence we naturally supply *which was*. But a teacher would be doing good work if he

could contrive some explanation of the words as they stand, without an ellipsis.

The rest of this chapter is a running commentary on typical sentences in which pupils like to understand an ellipsis, but in which there is no ellipsis.

A series of adjectives may modify one noun: "an *old, lonely, dingy* house." There is no ellipsis of *house* after each adjective. A series of nouns may be the objects of one preposition: "in every *alley, street,* and *boulevard.*" There is no ellipsis of *in* before the second and third nouns. In general it is true that there is no ellipsis in any series of words that have an identical construction. It is useful for pupils to recognize that there is no ellipsis in a series of verbs that belong to one subject: "Owen *looked* again at his watch, *pushed* aside the heavy curtain, and *gazed* wonderingly at the red cliffs." The pupil who fancies that *Owen* or *he* is understood before the second and third verbs is losing one of the most valuable distinctions that he ought to learn from a study of grammar —the distinction between a compound verb and a childish compound sentence of three clauses. The compound run-on sentence is a pest in school composition; the simple sentence with a compound verb is a blessing.

A pair of adjectives like "venturesome, but not reckless" could be said, by an over-scrupulous teacher, to form an elliptical compound sentence because of *not.* "How," he might ask, "can I explain *not* unless I say that there is an ellipsis of a subject and verb—*He was venturesome, but he was not reckless?*" The argument is cogent. But the fact is that *not* may be said to negative an adjective, that the writer did not think of a verb and would not express himself with a verb. The effect he wanted was a pair of adjectives without a verb, as in "good, but tiresome." A pair of adverbs may be contrasted with *but:* "not often, but occasionally." Each adverb is a modifier of the same word; there is no real ellipsis of the word before the second adverb.

A pair of subjects may be arranged in this way:

120. There came a *sound* of hoof-beats, then an *undertone* of voices.

It is true that there is no way to explain *then* except as an adverb modifying an elliptical *came;* if a teacher is questioned, he must admit this. But the structure of the sentence, as the author felt it, was simple, with a compound subject; the second subject does not cause a comma blunder.

Almost all pupils yearn to understand a noun or a pronoun after *each, some, many,* etc. They should learn not to supply a noun or a pronoun, but to accept *each* and kindred words as pronouns.

A rather troublesome form of modifier is a phrase showing place or time which modifies a noun: "the seat *in front of mine,* the day *after that.*" Since these sound adverbial, and since a pupil is taught to look for the verb that such phrases modify, he is excusable for supplying relative clauses: "the seat *that was* in front of mine, the day *that came* after that." But, in general, the desire to invent subordinate clauses is a vice; experience shows that the desire should be discouraged and that it is the best strategy to explain the *in* and *after* phrases as modifiers of the nouns.

The longing for understood clauses is most keen when pupils encounter passive participles like "a note *scribbled* on birch bark, the gifts *bought* with the proceeds." Pupils seem irresistibly drawn to "a note *that was* scribbled." They should learn to resist the lure. The participle modifies the noun directly. Nouns are modified by appositive adjectives: "a man *diligent* in his business, an officer *white* with rage." The adjectives are not predicates in elliptical *who* clauses, but modify directly.

There is a very general desire in human breasts for a preposition before an adverbial noun: "They arrived Thursday; it lasted many months." The preposition is a figment, for the nouns express time without it. No preposition should

be understood before indirect objects. It is safe to say that any explanation of syntax which resorts to an ellipsis of a preposition is false. (But see *a,* page 278.)

A capital example of false reliance on ellipsis is the effort to explain such a subjunctive as *do* in *"Do* what he would, the danger increased." *Do* is a verb that has a *what* clause for its object; it seems to stand as a remnant of some clause that is a sort of modifier of *increased:* "The danger increased in spite of his doing what he could." We can imagine various ellipses with *do:* "let him do, though he might do, in spite of what he could do." But all our imagining will not produce an idiom that is true to the facts of language or that explains what *do* stands for. Other similar verbs are "try as he might, look where he would, come what come may." All ellipses for these are vain inventions. We have to accept them. We must suppress the hope of reducing them to a regular pattern of syntax. We must beware of false ellipses.

CHAPTER 25

THE CONSTRUCTIONS OF CLAUSES

Chapters 18, 23, and 24 have cleared the way for this chapter by explaining the relative pronouns and the conjunctions that form clauses, and by explaining the parentheses and ellipses that sometimes obscure clauses. We are now ready to view the ways in which clauses fit into sentences: (1) as independent parts, or (2) as subordinate parts that have the functions of nouns, adjectives, or adverbs.

A. Independent Clauses

Chapter 13 explained what a simple sentence is: a group of words that is grammatically complete and that contains only one subject and one verb. (Chapter 24 explained how, by ellipsis of subjects and verbs, a sentence may consist of a mere phrase or of only one important word.) Chapter 14 explained what a complex sentence is: a simple sentence to which one or more subordinate clauses have been added. A compound sentence is formed by adding together two or more simple or complex sentences. A sentence that thus forms one of the components of a compound sentence is called an independent clause.

There are two ways of joining independent clauses. The first way is by using a semicolon or a colon. The colon means that the following clause is a kind of appositive statement, explaining the preceding clause in more concrete terms, thus:

1. With the drift of Miss Scudder's book a large public has long been familiar: it is a study of the reflection in English literature of the struggle by which democracy is slowly realizing itself.

The colon is a variant of the semicolon that is seldom used

except in an analytical style; hence it will not be mentioned again in this section, but will be understood whenever a semicolon is spoken of.

The second way of joining two independent clauses is by using a coordinating conjunction. For school composition the general and wise requirement is that the conjunction shall be preceded by a comma. (It may be preceded by a semicolon if an author wishes to show more disjunction of thought or greater emphasis.) The punctuation is a matter of taste or unsettled usage, and does not concern us here. The essential element of a grammatical compound sentence is *the way the clauses are joined*. Between two independent clauses there must be—if the sentence is grammatical by school and college standards—a semicolon or a coordinating conjunction.

We had a long talk, *and* it was a revealing one.
We had a long talk; it was a revealing one.

The teacher who does not understand this simple, basic fact will be always working in the dark.

He will be mystified and ill at ease unless he also knows the complementary fact that some compound sentences of literature are not grammatical in this strict sense. Authors now and then use a comma without a conjunction between independent clauses if the clauses are short or similar or make parallel statements about the same subject, or if the second clause expresses a subordinate idea. Some examples follow.

2. Prophecy is not a prediction, prophecy is a challenge.
3. One of them was affectionate, the other was coldly self-centered.
4. Ten years ago it would have pleased me, now it leaves me cold.
5. Mr. Sexton had been losing sleep, also he was worried about Miss Carver's letter.
6. Truth is no mere likeness of reality, there is no one-one correspondence between them.
7. His morality is more successful, it actually produces more good.

8. I don't simply believe we can, I know we can.
9. Each town supplied the big farming country behind it, each carried the Union Jack on a flagstaff in its playground.

Such sentences are not hard to find in literature, but they are rarer than some critics of school methods suppose. If we examine several thousand sentences in passages taken at random from such diverse matter as the *Britannica,* the *Saturday Evening Post,* the *Literary Digest,* a volume of recent essays, we discover that not more than one per cent of them are of this "comma sentence" type. One experiment of this sort, made with 1050 sentences, showed only seven comma sentences.* Comma sentences are so exceptional in well-punctuated matter that they cannot be a norm for school composition. Any pupil is mistrained and injured if allowed to form compound sentences without a conjunction or a semicolon.

Another exception to the general rule for joining independent clauses is that if a sentence is composed of three or more similar clauses, commas without conjunctions may be used between them. The following sentence is a rather extreme example, since the third clause is a question, and so is not uniform with the first two.

10. Gauguin called himself a wolf, Nietzsche was haunted by his fantasy of the blond beast, and how many philosophers have conceived themselves after the fashion of that old Hindu image of the "solitary rhinoceros"?

Sentence 11 is a typical three-clause sentence with commas.

11. They have their appointed places, they know their tasks, they belong to their school.

A school rule which forbids comma sentences is not dogmatic, is not in opposition to literary standards, and is not hampering the pupil's freedom of expression. Its only pur-

*The tabulation is as follows, figures in parentheses showing the number of comma sentences: *Britannica,* 200 (0); *Saturday Evening Post,* 200 (3); *Atlantic Monthly,* 100 (0); Van Wyck Brooks, 250 (1); the following 50 sentences each: E. D. Martin (0), Stuart Chase (0), G. A. Dorsey (0), *Mercury* (1), *Harpers* (2), *National Geographic* (0).

pose is to give pupils such training as will show them what literary standards are, as will show them the easiest and quickest way to freedom. If a school tolerates the use of the comma that is shown in sentences 2-9, it must tolerate the comma in long sentences, between clauses that are less similar; it cannot draw the line anywhere short of such a sentence as this: "The head of a shoe-factory near Boston, Mr. Abraham Wise, was an old friend of my family, I wrote to tell him of my idea." That sort of sentence is emphasized as intolerable in every list of minimum essentials that has ever been recommended to the schools of a city or a state or a group of states. It is usually called a "comma blunder." The ability to avoid it is everywhere considered the basic necessity in school writing. The only fair way to cultivate the ability is to set up some perfectly definite and simple specification. If pupils are left to guess or to "kind of feel," they are distracted and terrified. They must grope for some tricky distinction that eludes and baffles them. They can never be at ease, never advance confidently to knowledge, until they understand just what is required of them. As soon as they know the half-dozen common coordinating conjunctions, know the difference between these and the dozens of adverbs, and know what a semicolon is, they can realize the straightforward simplicity of the requirement for compound sentences: "either a conjunction or a semicolon."

A novice teacher who emerges from a detailed study of *for, while, else,* etc., may feel that conjunctions are a maze in which pupils will be lost. If *now* is not a coordinating conjunction, but is an adverb, but may be a subordinating conjunction when it means "now that"—how shall pupils be expected to learn all the windings and turnings? The answer is that pupils are never to be led through the maze. Not a tenth of it is needed by them. It is a conspectus of the whole of literary usage, for the information of teachers. When a teacher is familiar with it, when he has a little experience of

the field of school usage, he sees that his task is limited and definite. He sees, for one example, that pupils almost never use *now* except as an unmistakable adverb of time. He learns that they seldom use *yet,* and that *or* is not common. He does not have to worry about the theoretical status of *so,* for every pupil understands it so thoroughly that a teacher's only concern is to limit the use of the pestiferous conjunction. As a matter of practical operations in the classroom, the teacher has only to emphasize three words. "If you are using such words as *and, but,* and *for,*" he says, "you are forming a correct compound sentence. But you cannot form a compound sentence with such adverbs as *then, now, finally,* or *however.*" If he never went outside the range of those seven words, he would account for nine-tenths of all the comma blunders. By confining his attention to those two small groups of words, by insisting on the sharp distinction between them, he builds a sure knowledge of what a comma blunder is. If so much is established, the rest is an easy extension that can be made here and there, casually, at odd times.

The canny teacher will never set himself in opposition to the comma blunders of literature. He will freely admit that they exist and that authors sometimes actually use a comma to show that two independent clauses are closely associated in meaning. Such a use is a privilege of authors. "They know what they are doing," he may say. "If you had the delicate instincts of an author, you would be allowed to do as you please with commas. I want to train you as far as I can to know what authors know. The first thing for you to learn is what authors almost always do—namely, use a conjunction or a semicolon between two independent clauses. If we tried to learn the slippery little exceptions, we should have a fearfully hard time. You would be always doubtful and in trouble. The easy, sure way for us now is to learn the regular rule—just the A, B, C of authorship. We must allow no exceptions. You must prove in your themes that you can

master A, B, C. When you have gone so far, you may experiment with exceptions as much as you like."

A teacher may go further along this line toward freedom. He may say that any pupil who qualifies, by showing that he can always observe the school rule, may receive a special license to make comma blunders. Or he may grant all pupils permission to make occasional comma blunders, provided they put an asterisk over the comma and write as a footnote, "Intentional." This amnesty amuses the bright pupils and shows the class vividly the purpose of the iron-clad rule: to prevent the *ignorant* use of commas. Curiously enough, few pupils will take advantage of the permission. Its effect will be salutary in any school that knows how to issue licenses and control them.

Compound sentences may consist of an indefinite number of independent clauses, though sentences of more than four clauses are unusual in literature. To make a well-constructed sentence of three clauses is beyond the skill of the ordinary high-school pupil unless he has special instruction in how to balance one clause against two. A sentence of three or four clauses that moves sprawlingly ahead with conjunctions is a fearsome thing rhetorically, but is not ungrammatical. It has been well named a "run-on" sentence. But this useful term is sometimes applied also to the ungrammatical comma blunder, and so becomes meaningless; for the two kinds of sentences have nothing in common. Teachers who see the word "run-on" in pedagogical journals or textbooks should observe warily what the writer means by it.

If an independent clause is parenthetical within a simple or a complex sentence, does it make the sentence compound? The question is not raised in any grammar, and the answer would be of no particular value. But a teacher should be aware of the puzzle. The logical answer is that the parenthetical clause does not make a compound sentence, since it is a foreign body and does not alter the syntax.

A direct quotation is really an independent clause, but its

syntax is like that of a noun clause that is the object of some verb which introduces the quotation.

{Mr. Randolph shouted that he was safe.
{Mr. Randolph shouted, "I am safe."

Hence it is customary to speak of a direct quotation as a kind of noun clause. Sometimes a quotation is in apposition; sometimes it does not have quotation marks around it.

12. Over the gate were these ominous words: "Abandon hope."
13. One thought now possessed his mind: Capitalism is doomed.

The verbs that introduce quotations may not be the equivalents of *said,* but may be merely descriptions of the way the person spoke or of his action while he spoke.

14. "You're missing the point," *crunched* her mamma.
15. "Other men's folly," *flashes* Santayana, "reminds me that I may be foolish."

The independent clauses that form a compound sentence are called "coordinate," because they are of equal rank. The term is seldom ambiguous, but it should be understood that two subordinate clauses may also be called coordinate if they are of the same sort and act as a pair in performing the same function—thus:

16. This was a predicament *that was wholly unexpected* and *that threw us into despair.*

B. Noun Clauses

The typical and most common noun clause is made with the conjunction *that:* "that you have wronged me, that no bulletin has been issued." Most other noun clauses are made with the interrogative adverbs—*how, when, where, whether,* and *why*—and with the interrogative pronouns *who, which,* and *what.* The only other conjunctions that may make noun clauses (many of them archaic or of doubtful propriety) are *after, because, before, but, if, whence, while,* and *whither.*

Noun clauses may be formed without any conjunction: "He said ( ) he would. It happens ( ) I already have some. He had an idea ( ) we were hostile to him."

The rest of this section is a set of comments on the eight constructions which noun clauses may have.

1. Clauses as subjects of verbs. The following sentences show examples of ordinary subject clauses.

17. *How he ever endured the torture* is beyond understanding.
18. *What you say* is quite true.
19. *Who the real culprit was* will never be known.

Clauses made with *because, before, after,* and *while* may be subjects of verbs, but they are dubious idioms.

20. *Because they enjoy it* is no proof that it is good for them.
21. *Before he declared his intention* was a ticklish period for his party.
22. *While you are waiting for your cue* is the breathless time.

Subject clauses are often pushed beyond the verb by the expletive *it.*

23. It is not known *who the real culprit was.*
24. It is a question *whether we ought to afford it.*
25. It would be a calamity *if he were to fail now.*
26. It's not my fault *that the books are dusty.*
27. It now appears *that he was only joking.*

An *as if* clause after *appear, seem, look, be,* etc., may be regarded as a subject clause; for there is no way to distinguish between "It seemed *as if* he was pleased" and "It seemed *that* he was pleased." But *as if* clauses can always be explained as adverbial, and usually must be.

In questions or exclamations the subject clause may look at first glance like an object or a predicate.

28. Does it make any difference *whether the edges are even?*
29. What a tragedy it is *that the strongest lungs are most susceptible.*

In the next sentence the clause is the subject of *suffice.*

30. Suffice it *that I finally arrived at Waterville in safety.*

The following series of four sentences shows how subject clauses gradually shade off into a construction that seems more like an adverbial modifier of the main verb.

31. It was for this purpose *that I invited him.*
32. It was then *that I realized the danger.*
33. It is seldom ( ) *a tramp really wants to work.*
34. It was not long *before the tramp was tired of working.*

We can say that *it* in sentence 34 is impersonal and that the *before* clause modifies *was;* in fact, that is the feeling of the sentence. But, so far as form goes, we could call the clause a subject. We are more inclined to call it a subject when we bear in mind other clauses of place and time that are subjects.

35. *Where the saber came from* does not matter.
36. It doesn't matter *where we spend the night.*
37. It is doubtful *when he will be strong enough to travel.*

That clauses which refer to place may be subjects in form, however adverbial they seem.

38. It is in the traditions of this group *that we find the best evidence of the direction they had been following.*
39. It is here *that I want to live.*
40. It is on the rock *that your house should be builded.*

2. Clauses as objects of verbs or verbals. The next three sentences show object clauses that are formed with interrogative pronouns.

41. I can't tell *who is best qualified.*
42. Having forgotten *which medicine he took before dinner,* I felt quite sheepish.
43. To recall *what he then said* is like a strange dream.

The following sentences show object clauses formed with conjunctions, two of which are omitted.

44. I assure you [*that*] *I have no choice.*
45. They inquired *whether they might take the clock apart.*
46. We know not *whence life comes,* nor *whither it goes.*
47. Fearing [*that*] *we might be embarrassed,* she told us a funny story.
48. I know not *why I am so sad.*

49. I should like to find out *where he keeps himself.*
50. Can't you remember *when you last saw it?*
51. He asked *if he might feel my pulse.*

Object clauses may be introduced by an expletive *it.*

52. Let it be understood *that we may speak frankly.* (The clause is the object of *let.*)
53. I want it announced *that the rink must not be used till further notice.* (The clause is the object of *want.*)
54. You must make it clear *that infinitives are not verbs.* (The clause is the object of *must make; clear* is an objective predicate.)

A curious puzzle is what to say about clauses after *care.*

55. She won't care *who signs the card.*

Since the dictionaries do not admit that *care* is transitive in modern use, timid souls may wish to supply some preposition after *care.* The rest of us had better brave the dictionaries and say that the clause is what it looks like—an object of *care.*

Another puzzle is the noun clauses after pronoun objects.

56. I warned him *that he must never come again.*
57. The lawyer convinced me *that my case was hopeless.*

The pronouns seem to be direct objects; if they are, we are at a loss to explain the clauses, except as some kind of second object. (Compare sentence 101, page 354.) But after certain similar verbs we see that the clauses may be direct objects.

58. I told him *I was satisfied.*
59. I explained to him *why he must be prompt.*
60. I notified him *that his account was overdrawn.*

The easiest explanation of the pronouns after the following verbs is that they are indirect objects: "reminded *him* that, persuaded *him* that, informed *him* that, cautioned *her* that." An indication that they are indirect objects is that they may be made the subjects of passive verbs and the clauses may become retained objects: "*he* was reminded that; *he* was informed that," etc. The same reasoning can be applied to sentences 56 and 57: "he was warned that, I was convinced that."

The structure of noun clauses may be obscured by an expletive *it*.

61. I never knew *what it was to have all I wanted to eat.*

The skeleton of the clause is "what to have was" (in which *to have* is the subject and *what* is the predicate); *all* is the object of *to have* and is modified by a relative clause, *(that) I wanted to eat.*

The structure of noun clauses may be made debatable by a parenthesis.

62. I don't like what *I suppose* he is hinting at.

It could be said that "what he is hinting at" is the object of *suppose*. But this explanation would involve us in the question, "What sort of clause is *I suppose?*" That fearsome question had best be avoided by calling *I suppose* parenthetical within the *what* clause.

A good illustration of how to straighten out any tangled noun clause is the Bible verse:

63. Whom do men say that I am?

The subordinate clause is *"that I am whom,"* in which *whom* is the predicate after *am*. The interrogative pronoun looks so much like an object of *do say* that the translators made it objective. In the normal order, in modern prose, we use the nominative:

64. *Who* do men say that he is?

(See page 227.)

3. Clauses as predicate nominatives. Indubitable predicate clauses are shown in the next three sentences.

65. The question is *whether the atmosphere really is ionized.*
66. That is not *what I am talking about.*
67. What I had to find out was *where they got the keys.*

Pupils always tend to use predicate *where* and *when* clauses for definitions: "a peninsula is where; apoplexy is when." Most uneducated persons prefer a *where* clause to a *that* clause when they are speaking of an item of news: "I saw

in the paper *where* five people were killed in an airplane yesterday." Such *when* and *where* clauses are a pest in school and are not tolerated by experienced teachers. Clauses that have a somewhat similar appearance can be found in literature, but the appearance is only superficial. Examples are:

68. That is *where you are mistaken.*
69. The time of keenest griefs is *when you are an infant.*
70. Another exciting moment was *when the electricity failed.*

A predicate clause made with *because* is unpleasant to some fastidious ears, which would prefer *that.*

71. The reason I declined is *because the dinner would be hard on my nerves.*

Predicate clauses may be made with *after, before,* and *while.*

72. The hardest period was *after the upper class was dismissed.*

But the clause seems adverbial and can be said to modify *was.*

4. Clauses as objects of prepositions. No absolute distinction can be made between conjunctions and prepositions that precede a clause. In the following sentence we could call *but* either a conjunction or a preposition that has the clause for its object.

73. I never look at him *but I am reminded of a crocodile.*

It is common practice, and wise teaching policy, to call *but* a conjunction because it is doing the work of a conjunction. If *before* or *after* or any other word joins a subordinate clause, it may be called a conjunction.

A clause is said to be the object of a preposition only when there is a conjunction or an interrogative pronoun after the preposition, as in the following sentences.

74. She spoke *of how* strange it was.
75. I can tell you nothing *but what* you already know.
76. There's no reason for preferring it *except that* it costs less.
77. Sneath inquired *about which* road I had taken.
78. She resembles me *in that* she dislikes loud people.
79. The salesman behaved quite differently *from what* I had expected.

80. I am in doubt *as to whether* he spoke seriously.
81. It's not fair to judge only *by what* pleasure you get from it.

5. Clauses as retained objects. An object clause may become a retained object when the sentence is turned into a passive form.

82. We were told *that no wagons had passed during the night.*
83. I was informed *that Mr. Shedd wished to see me.*
84. The boys were warned *that they might be arrested.*

6. Clauses as objective predicates. A *what* clause may be an objective predicate.

85. His harsh discipline made me *what I am.*

7. Clauses as exclamations. For an example of clauses that stand as exclamations see page 334, number 94.

8. Clauses as absolute. A noun clause modified by a participle may be used like a nominative absolute noun or pronoun.

86. *Granted that you are right,* the condition is serious (like "this fact being granted").
87. *Why they protest being a merely academic question,* let's ask what they are protesting (like "this being").

9. Clauses in apposition. Noun clauses may be put alongside nouns and set off by commas or dashes in a purely appositive way.

88. I am troubled by another fear, *that Silvio will send out a search-party.*
89. Their unrecognized assumption—*namely, that laborers are all honest and kind-hearted*—is nonsensical as soon as it is brought to light.

Similar appositive clauses are more often not set off: "the question *whether it is wise,* the reason *why they faltered,* the evidence *that he has further knowledge,* the opinion *that ministers should not preach about politics,* no idea *why they are so insistent.*" The commonest noun before appositive clauses is *doubt.*

90. I have no doubt *that you are right.*
91. "I can have but little doubt *that my writing has been too hard for many,*" wrote Browning.

Certain noun clauses are so closely coalesced with nouns that we are hardly conscious of them as appositives.

92. I will go on condition *that you take my place here.*
93. Just on the chance *that he might reconsider* we sent an urgent telegram.
94. Gifford accepted, with the understanding *that all his expenses would be paid.*
95. I am in hopes *that all tickets can be sold.*

If the nouns are colorless, if they are used as mere conventional connectives, they come to seem almost a part of the clause.

96. For fear *that he might lose the receipt,* he pasted it in his hat.
97. In case *you decide to call me,* ask for Mr. Potter.
98. In order *that there may be no delay,* send the parcel "Special Handling."
99. For all *he laughs and pooh-poohs,* he really suffers.

These *for* and *in* phrases are such mere joining words that they could be called conjunctions. They may, indeed, grow into conjunctions some time, just as the phrase "by cause" grew into the conjunction *because.* The phrases are adverbial modifiers of a verb. If they are called conjunctions, they form adverb clauses.

Noun clauses that resemble these vague appositives are sometimes used after nouns in ways that defy analysis.

100. He was perfectly at a loss *what measures he should take.*
101. She couldn't make up her mind *that the price would have to be lowered.*

The *what* clause could be explained as an object of an understood *as to,* and the *that* clause as in apposition with a word in such an understood phrase as *to the fact;* but there is no evidence that the authors were conscious of any such ellipses or would tolerate them.

From this degree of vagueness of syntax noun clauses may slip still further and become practically adverbial in meaning.

102. I feel a deep bitterness *that I am not appreciated.*
103. My conscience troubles me *that I have been so remiss.*

The *that* clauses are felt as noun-like, as presenting "the fact that"; but in meaning they are like *because* clauses, and so are really adverbial. Two other examples are given under noun clauses, page 354.

Somewhat akin to these clauses so closely associated with nouns are the noun clauses which are closely associated with adjectives.

104. I am sure *that he means well.*
105. Aren't you afraid *they are counterfeit?*
106. Be careful *what you do.*

The clauses could be, logically, called adverbial, since they are connected with adjectives; but they have no resemblance to adverb clauses, either in meaning or function. They sound exactly like noun clauses, but their construction is not paralleled among the constructions of nouns. We might say that they are, in some exceptional way, the objects of the adjectives, for that statement would represent their use. We could guess that there has been an ellipsis of "for, by, at, or of the fact"; but the phrases are unreal; they never were present in the idioms. We must cheerfully accept the fact—a rather entertaining one—that some noun clauses lawlessly attach themselves to adjectives. They are found especially with the following: *glad, sorry, thankful, grateful, astonished, amazed, grieved.* Two examples of less common ones are given below.

107. Veblen was *right that* ideas of this sort are opposed to the chaos of competitive enterprise.
108. Mr. Chase is *emphatic that* the system has outlived its usefulness.

Just as nouns may be appositives that precede the noun with which they are in apposition, so appositive clauses may precede the nouns or pronouns which they explain.

109. *What I dislike,* that I refuse to talk about.

The clause seems to be a sort of appositive explaining *that,* just as the *what* clause in the next sentence explains *vision.*

110. Monkeys have hands and, *what the lemurs lack,* macular vision to guide their hands.

Such clauses could be equally well analyzed in a different way—as parentheses that have no construction in the sentence. Sentence 109 may be thought of as a broken-off construction similar to "This dislike of mine—I won't talk about it": the writer starts with a noun *dislike* and then leaves it hanging, shifting to another form of statement. The *what* clause in sentence 110 can be considered parenthetical, equivalent to "this is something that the lemurs lack." But its meaning is closely interwoven with the syntax; it is somewhat explanatory of *macular vision,* and so seems more like an appositive, though it cannot be placed after *vision,* as an ordinary appositive could.

One way of describing the syntax is as good as the other, and neither way would signify in composition if it were not for the fact that pupils blunder by not understanding these detached *what* clauses. They attempt, for example, to write a sentence like the following:

111. I bought a bull-fighter's cape—what is called in Spain a *muleta*—and mailed it to Hortense.

They produce something of this sort: "I bought—what is called in Spain—a *muleta.*" There is nothing appositive in the sentence; it contains only an object clause and should be written without punctuation: "I bought what is called in Spain a *muleta.*" No pupil can steer himself straight in the use of *what* clauses unless he is familiar with the difference between object clauses and purely parenthetical clauses like the following:

112. And now—what is more the point—I will tell you Gilkey's version of the affair.

113. We did our own cleaning—what there was of it—and our own cooking.

C. Adjective Clauses

Most adjective clauses are formed with the relative pronouns *who, which,* and *that.* See pages 212-223. Only two comments on relatives are needed here.

The first is merely to call attention to the discussion (page 229) of relative clauses that modify *it* instead of the nouns which they are close to and seem to modify.

114. It is a cheaper grade *that we want.*
115. It is not the piston *that is out of order.*

The *that* clauses do not modify *grade* and *piston,* but *it.*

The second comment is on the numerous *that* clauses which show time, manner, or amount.

116. The year *that he died* was a momentous one for America.
117. This is not the way *that you are expected to act.*

As explained on page 313, *that* in these clauses was originally a relative; but its relative function is now so obscured that it may properly be called a conjunction. In this section we are not concerned with the connective, but with the fact that the clauses are adjectival and modify the nouns *year* and *way.* The connective is commonly omitted, as in the following examples: "the day *they departed,* the way *I told you,* the time *I saw you,* the reason *you do so poorly.*"

Clauses of this kind which are long or involved seem not to have a proper structure and are a poor model for pupils, though they occur at times in learned writing.

118. It is beyond the patient's power to repress the impulses in a way *that their energy can find adequate expression.*
119. Our justification lies in the manner *we have attained these opinions.*

The following conjunctions may form clauses that are attached to nouns of time and place: *after, before, since, when, whence, while, whither.* Some illustrations are: "the minute *after the probe went in,* the hour *before the game began,* the long years *since he visited us,* the time *when he was ex-*

pelled, the sharp curve *where the accident happened,* the city *whither he was next to go."*

But may form an adjective modifier in two ways: (1) It may be a preposition with a noun clause for its object.

120. You should buy nothing *but what is durable.*

(2) It may be used with the meaning of "which not, who not."

121. There's no situation in life *but has its advantages* (that is, "which has not").

122. There was not one of us *but would have died for her* (that is, "who would not have died").

Except may, like *but,* have a noun clause for its object, and so form a phrase that modifies a noun.

123. We got no information *except what we could discover for ourselves.*

Like forms adjective clauses that are taboo in most schools.

124. I wish we had some ancient shrines *like they have in Japan.*

D. Adverb Clauses

Of the forty subordinating conjunctions listed on pages 307-316 all but two *(how* and *why)* may form adverb clauses. The adverb clauses are a wide-ranging tribe, and on first aquaintance they seem tumultuous. But they are really the most orderly of the three kinds of subordinate clauses. They are of two sorts: (1) those that show comparison by modifying some adjective or adverb, (2) those that modify verbs.

1. The adverb clauses that show comparison

The most regular and obvious clauses of comparison are those formed with *than.*

125. This was worse *than I had bargained for.*

126. There are more things in heaven and earth *than are dreamt of in your philosophy.*

127. We had no sooner sat down *than we were ordered to stand up again.*

128. There is now less dust *than there was formerly.*
129. There are fewer taxis in Chicago *than there are in New York.*

The clauses modify the comparatives *worse, more, sooner, less, fewer.* In some *than* clauses there is no subject, and none can be supplied; cf. sentences 126 and 128.

Clauses of comparison that modify *as, so,* and *such* are formed with *as.*

130. This is *as* far *as we had better go.*
131. The cells are not *so* large *as you seem to think.*
132. There is *such* jubilation here *as was never heard before.* (No subject can be supplied in the *as* clause.)
133. We discard all *such* fruit *as is found to be wormy.*

Clauses of comparison that modify *so* may be formed with *that* and *but that.*

134. The quarterback was *so* confident *that he gave the signal for a forward pass.*
135. The trigger was *so* adjusted *that a bird's weight would pull it.*
136. I am not *so* busy *but that I can read a good deal.*
137. It was not *so* dark *but that the path was visible.*

The conjunction may be omitted.

138. Olga was *so* entranced ( ) *she could only gasp.*

Two comparative adverbs or adjectives may be set off against each other in two clauses that seem coordinate.

139. The *higher* you climb, the *harder* you have to breathe.
140. The *more* guests there were, the *better* she was pleased.

In such sentences the second clause is the main clause, and the first one is a modifier—as if the sentences were "You have to breathe harder in proportion as you climb higher; she was better pleased in proportion as there were more guests." The subordinate clauses modify the comparative in the main clause (or they could be said to modify the verb of the main clause). The subordinate clause may come last.

141. We grew more frightened *the farther we went.*

2. The adverb clauses that modify verbs

The great majority of adverb clauses modify verbs in obvious ways—showing (1) time, (2) place, (3) manner, (4) condition, (5) reason, or (6) purpose. They may follow the verb or may precede it.

142. (Time) They continued along the ridge *until it was almost dark.*

143. (Time) *Now that Harrington had finished his roaring song,* we could have a little conversation.

144. (Place) You may put up your hammock *anywhere you like.*

145. (Place) *Where your treasure is,* there will your heart be also.

146. (Manner) You will have to do exactly *as you are told.*

147. (Condition) *If one man found a nugget,* all the others tried to dig in the same place.

Conditional clauses may be written without any conjunction: "Were I a little younger, should our plans change, had you only let me know, could we feel sure of this, would we but open our minds to the truth, did we but know the secret."

148. (Reason) *Since Margaret's idea looked promising,* she was allowed to experiment.

149. (Purpose) Try to seem respectful, *lest you gain a reputation for conceit* (or "so that you will not gain").

The various uses of the conjunctions that form adverb clauses have been treated in Chapter 23. Only one supplementary comment is needed here—a remark about noun clauses formed with *that.* If these clauses are the objects of *but, except,* or *save,* they are adverbial in meaning; it is best to say that they are joined to a verb by *but that, except that, save that.* The same advice holds for the noun clauses that follow such phrases as *in order that, in case that.* (See page 354.) *That,* when combined with *not,* may have the meaning of "but that" or "without."

150. I never saw her *that I did not pay her homage.*

The rest of this section explains some groups of clauses that are not exactly modifiers, but that express some accompanying circumstance.

1. The *no-matter* clauses. These are introduced by *no matter, whether,* and the *ever* compounds. They modify the verb in the main clause by expressing the idea that the statement is true in spite of what is opposed to it.

151. You must remain polite—*no matter how insulting he may be.*

152. The Platonic path leads to dilemmas, *no matter who treads it.*

153. A soldier has to obey, *whether he thinks the order wrong or not.*

154. *However much he is praised,* he never grows conceited.

155. *Whatever changes sports may experience in the next few years,* Mr. Bingham assures us he can keep pace with them.

156. The terrier was never afraid, *whoever his adversary might be.*

2. Parenthetical modifiers. Any conjunction may form a clause which is non-restrictive in meaning—that is, which modifies a verb so loosely that it is set off by commas or dashes. Some non-restrictive clauses made with *as* are so parenthetical in meaning that they are not like modifiers.

157. These tariffs—*as I remarked a moment ago*—were not originally intended to produce revenue.

158. Well, now, *as regards your illness,* you must realize that it was brought on by your own imprudence.

The *as* clauses do not mean "were intended as I remarked" or "must realize as regards"; they are not real modifiers. But they have the form of modifiers and are said, as a matter of grammar, to belong with the verbs.

3. Concessive clauses. Clauses which have the meaning of "though" concede that, in spite of some fact, the statement made by the main verb is true.

159. *Although the crowd was wildly excited and indignant,* it remained orderly during the first hour.

Concessive clauses are sometimes not introduced by a conjunction.

160. *Be that as it may,* I have not yet become an invalid.
161. *Let him be never so evasive,* he cannot evade the fingerprints.
162. *Strange as it is,* it is true.
163. *Say what you will,* there's a better time coming.

The clauses modify the verb in the main clause, having the meaning of "in spite of this fact, the statement is true."

4. Result clauses. Clauses which mean "and therefore as a result," introduced by *so* or by such adverbs as *therefore* and *thus,* are independent; but *so that* can be thought of as adverbial.

164. The pickets were set only two inches apart, *so that no cat was able to squeeze through.*

If the clause were "so that no cat might," it would show purpose. It is often difficult to distinguish between purpose and result.

Certain clauses which are obviously subordinate, but hard to classify, have a resemblance to result clauses.

165. What ails this people *that their conduct should be so eccentric?* ("that, as a result of what ails them, they should be so eccentric").

5. Additive clauses. *When* and *where* may form non-restrictive clauses which are not modifiers in the ordinary sense, but merely add some important information. These clauses, although they add statements that are independent in meaning, are modifiers in form and are so called.

The adverb clauses made with *when* shade gradually from closely restrictive modifiers to an utterly additive and independent meaning.

166. I was growing lonesome *when you called me.*
167. I was beginning to speak of the famous poets I knew, *when Garfield interrupted me.*
168. Two of the cubs will be playing, *when one suddenly stops and moves off.*

The clause in 166 clearly means "was growing at that particular time when you called." The clause in sentence 167 could hardly mean that "I was beginning when Garfield interrupted," because I must have begun before he could interrupt; but the clause is somewhat debatable. The clause in sentence 168 obviously cannot mean "will be playing when one of them stops"; it means "and then one of them stops." Since there is no sharp distinction between the closely modifying *when* and the entirely additive *when,* the additive *when* clause is called adverbial.

The skilful teacher will seldom focus the attention of a class on exceptional or ambiguous clauses. He will use the information in this chapter merely as his own background for the simple scheme which embraces almost all that pupils need to know:

I. The noun clauses that are the subjects or objects of verbs

II. The adjective clauses that are formed with *who, which,* and *that*

III. The adverb clauses that modify verbs.

"The simple scheme of what pupils need to know" is an idea which should be continually reinforced in the mind of a teacher who becomes familiar with all the information given in Part Three. The teacher whose knowledge did not reach beyond that narrow limit could not be efficient, for he would be confused by the dark complexities that would stretch out on every side. But if there are no dark places, he can lead the class easily and safely along the road of the knowledge that is directly useful for composition.

CHAPTER 26

PARSING AND DIAGRAMING

A. Parsing

Parsing a word is giving an account of its form and its construction in a given sentence. Complete and formal parsing has pretty much gone out of use, because the rehearsing of formalities wastes time and distracts attention from what is essential. The following directions are given, not to recommend them for use, but as information for teachers who wish it.

Verb: Say whether the verb is transitive or intransitive; give the voice if transitive; say which conjugation it belongs to and give the three principal parts; give the mood and tense; give the person and number, and name the subject.

Verbals: Say whether the verbal is a participle, infinitive, or gerund; proceed as with verbs through transitive or intransitive, voice, conjugation, and principal parts; then explain the construction of the verbal as adjective or adverb or noun.

Noun: Give its class (common, proper, abstract, or collective), gender, and number; give its case and explain its construction. (It used to be customary in formal parsing to name the person also, though this is always third.)

Pronoun: Give its class; name its antecedent; give its person, gender, and number (which are the same as those of the antecedent); give its case and explain the construction. (The inflection of the pronoun was sometimes given after the class.)

Adjective: Give its class; compare it if it has comparison and give its degree of comparison; say what it modifies.

Adverb: Say what kind it is (of time, place, etc.); compare it if it has comparison and give its degree of comparison; say what it modifies.

Preposition: Name the object of the preposition; say what the phrase modifies and say whether the phrase is adjectival or adverbial.

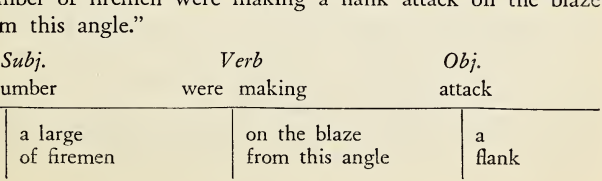
Conjunction: Say what it connects; in parsing a coordinating conjunction name the two words, phrases, clauses, or sentences that are joined; in parsing a subordinating conjunction say what word the subordinate clause is joined to and whether the clause is like a noun, an adjective, or an adverb.

Interjection: Say what kind of emotion it expresses.

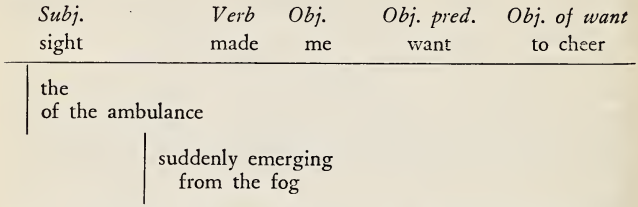
B. Diagraming

For advanced classes, if the teacher is adept, a fully analytical method of diagraming may be successful. For the ordinary high-school class such a method is likely to defeat its own purpose. Only the simplest exhibit of the chief elements of a sentence is advisable. The pupil who is unable to express in some graphic way the structure of sentences does not understand sentences; pupils who are trained to chart the structure learn much.

The most obvious way of diagraming a sentence is to write the framework on a horizontal line—subject, verb, predicate or object of the verb—and to write below these parts the words, phrases, or clauses that modify them. An example is the diagram of the following sentence: "A large number of firemen were making a flank attack on the blaze from this angle."

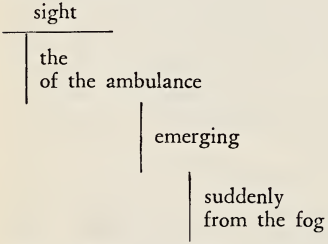


Sometimes the framework shows a telescoping series of objects, as in the diagram of this sentence: "The sight of the ambulance suddenly emerging from the fog made me want to cheer."



Me is the object of *made; want* is an objective predicate; *to cheer* is the object of *want.*

The diagram may be made as analytical as a teacher wishes by drawing vertical lines down from modified words, as shown below.



Pupils should learn to foresee, before they begin to write a diagram, where the modifiers belong—whether most of them will come under the subject or under the predicate. In the following long sentence there is an immense *with* phrase that explains the subject: "The sailing-ship, with little or no overhead, no coal-bunkers to deplete, no highly-paid crew to keep, and also (since she generally lies at open anchorage) no dock dues to pay, can take as much time as necessary to load."

Subj. sailing-ship | *Verb* can take | *Obj.* time

the sailing-ship | can take | time
- with little or no overhead
- with no coal-bunkers to deplete
- with no highly-paid crew to keep
- and also no dock dues to pay

time: as much as necessary to load

can take: since she generally lies at open anchorage

Independent elements—such as interjections, nouns of address, parentheses—may be written, with a line drawn around them, where their emphasis falls: "There are ignorant men, Mr. Forest, who think these island people are savages who care only to eat and sleep."

(Mr. Forest)

Subj. men | *Verb* (there) are

men | (there) are
- ignorant
- who think — *Obj. of think*: these island people are savages

savages: who care only to eat and sleep

In the next sentence almost all the modifiers come below the predicate: "After the young birds have left the nest and acquired strength in flight, the family groups forage about the country with great excitement and vociferation."

Subj. groups | *Verb* forage

groups | forage
- the family

forage:
- after the young birds have left the nest and acquired strength in flight
- about the country
- with great excitement and vociferation

The modifiers are about equally divided in the following sentence: "The second method which the bandits used for

the extortion of money was far simpler and was always employed in those districts which they controlled."

Subj.	*Verb*	*Pred.*
method	was	simpler
	and	far
	was employed	

the second	always		
which the bandits used for	in those districts		
the extortion of money		which they controlled	

An illustration of a long and intricate simple sentence is this: "Reading, and watching the buyers at dealers' auctions in more sophisticated communities, he has picked up a good deal of information, and has never been too proud to accept instruction from his customers, counting the humiliation of a poor trade a valuable lesson, and charging his loss to the next customer."

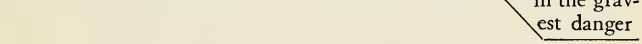
Subj.	*Verb*	*Pred.*	*Obj.*
he	has picked		deal
	up		a good
	and		of information
	has been	proud	

reading, and watching the buyers at dealers' auctions in more sophisticated communities	never	too
		to accept instruction from his customers
counting the humiliation of a poor trade a valuable lesson		
and charging his loss to the next customer		

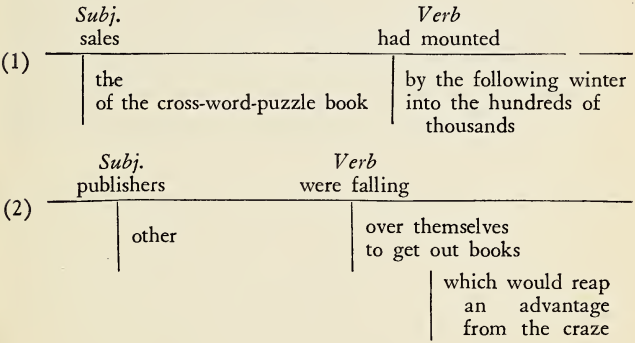
Noun clauses used as subjects or predicates or objects may be written in the framework with a line above them: "It is hard to see why people are afraid of him."

	Subj.	*Verb*	*Pred.*
(it)	why people are afraid of him	is	hard
			to see

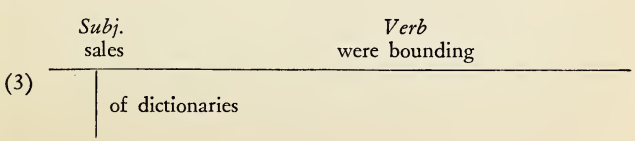
An example of three noun clauses in one sentence is this: "What I want to know is whether you realize that she is now in the gravest danger."



The diagram of a compound sentence is merely a series of diagrams of simple or complex sentences: "By the following winter the sales of the cross-word-puzzle book had mounted into the hundreds of thousands, other publishers were falling over themselves to get out books which would reap an advantage from the craze, and sales of dictionaries were bounding."



and



The usefulness of diagraming will be spoiled if emphasis is put upon the "right" way of assorting modifiers. Ingenuity should be encouraged; peculiar or even dubious explanations should be accepted if a pupil can defend his analysis with any show of good sense. The purpose of recitations is not to arrive at the only correct solutions of puzzles, but to attain the ability to exhibit, in any sensible fashion, the structure of ordinary sentences.

PART FOUR

THE FORMS AND CLASSIFICATIONS OF WORDS

Part Four is in six sections: 1. Verbs and Verbals, 2. Nouns, 3. Pronouns, 4. Adjectives, 5. Adverbs, 6. Abbreviations and Contractions. A list of the prepositions is on page 258; a list of the coordinating conjunctions is on pages 299-305, of the subordinating conjunctions on pages 307-316; interjections are described on pages 254-255.

SECTION 1: VERBS AND VERBALS

The classification of verbs as transitive or intransitive is treated on pages 153-162. Active and passive voices are described on page 153. Moods are explained on pages 149-153. The agreement of subject nouns with their verbs is described on pages 167-170. This section gives an exhibit of the forms of verbs—their conjugation.

The exhibit is arranged in the customary six tenses: present and perfect, past and past perfect, future and future perfect. It should be understood that these tenses are conventions of grammar and may be quite different from the *times* to which the verbs refer. For instance, *am leaving* is a present tense; but in "I am leaving soon" it refers to future time. The same is true of "We *begin* next week; he *comes* tomorrow; I shall read while I *wait* for you." A present tense may be used in a narrative to make past time vivid: "Now the *Vanitie* forges ahead." The present tense is used of general truths without reference to any time, or including all times: "Water boils at a lower temperature in Denver." A past tense may refer to present or future time: "I shouldn't think it *was* polite; it would be well if you *sent* him word." The difference between tense and time is well shown in the following sentence: "Tomorrow morning he *gives* the address of welcome, and of course he *would like* to say that he *was* sincerely glad to see the visitors."

The tenses of complicated verbs like *should have bought* or *might have been exaggerated* are often difficult to determine. Philosophical minds which wrestle with such problems of tense have found a need of more categories than the mere six tenses named in English grammars. They have proposed an outline of nine tenses; they have classified tenses as momentaneous, durative, and iterative, and

have subdivided these groups to show the kind of duration and iteration. They have proposed classifications into twenty—yes, into thirty—tenses. These extreme efforts are mentioned to show how perfunctory and often misleading is the set of tenses in which grammars arrange the forms of verbs.

A list of the forms of one verb, *move,* in the indicative mood, in six tenses, two voices, and two numbers (exclusive of the *thou* forms) is given below. "He" is used to represent any third-person singular subject, "they" to represent any third-person plural subject.

Active and Intransitive

PRESENT TENSE

Singular	*Plural*
I, you move he moves	we, you, they move

PERFECT TENSE

I, you have moved he has moved	we, you, they have moved

PAST TENSE

I, you, he moved	we, you, they moved

PAST PERFECT TENSE

I, you, he had moved	we, you, they had moved

FUTURE TENSE

I, you, he shall or will move	we, you, they shall or will move

FUTURE PERFECT TENSE

I, you, he shall or will have moved	we, you, they shall or will have moved

Note 1. Intransitives that have a passive form. In "The work is finished" the verb is passive, but in "Congress is finished with the work" the verb is intransitive. This form of intransitive appears in certain other verbs: "I *am done* with him; it *is* all *gone;* we *are agreed.*"

Note 2. Third person singulars that lack *s*. The auxiliaries *can, shall, must,* etc., do not have *s* for the third person singular. Neither has *ought*. *Need* and *dare* may have *s* ("he needs no endorsement"), but more often have no *s* when they are before *not:* "He need not fear; he dare not speak."

Note 3. The false past perfect. There is a widespread habit, even in the speech of educated people, of putting *have* into a past perfect tense used with *if,* especially with *if only* and *if just:* "If I had only *have* known, if I'd just *have* known." This "past past perfect" has hardly been noticed in American textbooks, but Jespersen gives a page of quotations that contain it, ranging from Caxton to Stockton. The most notable is from Tennyson's *Becket,* III, 3: "She had safelier *have* killed an archbishop."

PASSIVE

Singular	*Plural*
PRESENT TENSE	
I am moved you are moved he is moved	we, you, they are moved
PERFECT TENSE	
I, you have been moved he has been moved	we, you, they have been moved
PAST TENSE	
I was moved you were moved he was moved	we, you, they were moved
PAST PERFECT TENSE	
I, you, he had been moved	we, you, they had been moved
FUTURE TENSE	
I, you, he shall or will be moved	we, you, they shall or will be moved
FUTURE PERFECT TENSE	
I, you, he shall or will have been moved	we, you, they shall or will have been moved

In the second person singular throughout the conjugation of the verbs there is an archaic form used with *thou* which is usually made with *st:* thou movest, hadst moved, etc. The forms not made with *st* are *art, wert, wilt, shalt.* In the second person plural the archaic *ye* may be used instead of *you.*

In addition to this regular scheme of the conjugation there are four other ways of expressing the different tenses.

1. The future with *go* and an infinitive. Instead of *shall* and *will* we may express the future with *going* and an infinitive: "I am, he is, etc., going to move; I was, they were, etc., going to move." These forms may be extended to such phrases as *have been going to, had been going to.* Such an extension as *shall have been going to* is possible, but absurd.

2. The continuative forms. With *am, is, was,* and *were,* we form verbs that show action as continuing; *am moving, was moving, shall be moving, had been moving,* etc.; *am being moved, were being moved, etc.* The grammarian Sweet seriously listed such verbs as *shall be being moved, shall have been being moved,* but these are merely inventions.

3. The emphatic forms with *do*. Present and past tenses that have an emphatic meaning are made with *do:* do move, does move, did move.

4. The forms with auxiliaries. Present and perfect tenses are made with the auxiliaries *may, can, must, might, could, would,* and *should:* may move, can be moved, must have moved, might have been moved, could be moving, would have been moved, should have been moving.

Subjunctive Mood

For an explanation of the subjunctive see pages 150-153. The only true subjunctive forms of *to be* are *be* and *were:* "if I be, if this be, though they be; if I were, if he were, etc."

The subjunctive of *have* is *have* in the third person singular. This may form perfect subjunctives: "if he have moved, if it have been moved."

The only true subjunctive form of other verbs in the active or intransitive is made by the omission of *s* in the third person singular: "if he move, though she move." Subjunctive passives are formed with *be* and *were:* "if it be moved, if this were moved."

Imperative Mood

The imperative form of *to be* is *be:* "Be quiet; be a hero in the strife." This may (though rarely) form passive imperatives of other verbs: "Be cheered; be killed if necessary."

The imperative form of other verbs is the same as the root infinitive: *"Do* your best; *see* what you can do; *move* it a little."

Infinitives

Present: to move (or move), to be moving, or moved

Perfect: to have moved, to have been moving, or moved

Note. The perfect infinitive with *like*. A standard dictum of textbooks is that the perfect infinitive ought not to be used after *should like* ("should like to have seen"), but that the present infinitive should be used after the perfect of the verb: "I should have liked to see." This rule is not corroborated in literature, as the following quotations will indicate:

I should like to have added. (Samuel Butler)

I should like to have included. (Gamaliel Bradford)

I should like to have had Dr. Messer answer his own question. (Lowell)

The forms *I should have liked to see* and *I should like to have seen* are alternative ways of adding the temporal notion. (*Oxford Dictionary* under *shall,* 19, c.)

Participles

Present: moving, moved, being moved (*moved* is also called a passive or a past participle)
Perfect: having moved, having been moved

Gerunds

Present: moving, being moved
Perfect: having moved, having been moved

The Spelling of Past Tenses, Participles, and Gerunds

Ordinarily *ed* and *ing* are added to verbs directly: *asked, radioed, creeping, offering.* But a single final consonant (except *x* and *w*) is doubled if it is preceded by a single vowel and if the final syllable is accented: *stopped, beginning, repelled, preferred, equipped, acquitted.* The *ui* is counted as a single vowel, since it has the sound of *wi.* The only exceptions to the rule for doubling a final consonant are *chagrined* and certain verbs that end in a silent *t: crocheted, croqueted,* and sometimes *ricocheted.* In the three following paragraphs only the *ed* forms will be spoken of; it is understood that the statements apply also to the *ing* forms.

In British usage many final consonants are doubled even if there is no accent on the final syllable: *travelled, worshipped.* The British usage is erratic in the extreme. For example, it requires the double *p* in *worshipped,* but the single *p* in *galloped.* Anyone who wishes to study the forms used in England will find full comment on them in Fowler's *Modern English Usage* by looking under bbb, ddd, ggg, ppp, etc.

In America the rule for doubling is extended to verbs that do not have the principal accent on the last syllable, but that have a secondary accent there. For example, American dictionaries agree that *handicapped* is the correct form because there is a secondary accent on *cap.* (Though the *Standard* does not indicate this accent, it recognizes the

accent by doubling the *p.*) Examples of doubling consonants for a secondary accent, agreed on by all American dictionaries, are: *burlapped, cobwebbed, eavesdropping, hobnobbed, underpinning.* (*Humbugged, periwigged,* and *waterlogged* are other examples, but it may be argued that *g* is doubled to prevent the appearance of a soft sound of *g.*) The *Century* consistently follows the rule for *kidnapped* and *nonplussed;* but—for some reason that is not explained, and that cannot be defended—the *Standard* and the *International* prefer *kidnaped* and *nonplused,* giving *kidnapped* and *nonplussed* as second choices. If the *Standard,* which indicates no secondary accent in *handicap,* allows only *handicapped,* it cannot justify *kidnaped* and *nonplused.* There is no agreement, in England or America, about the participles of *diagram* and *monogram;* there is authority for both the single and the double *m.*

American pupils (and some of their elders) have a preference for certain doubled consonants that are not called for by American usage—especially for *travelled* and *focussed.* These need not be objected to, but are counter to the general rule.

Three verbs in *ay* form an irregular past tense and past participle in *aid: laid, paid, said.*

If a verb ends in *ie,* the *ie* is changed to *y* before *ing: tie, tying; lie, lying; vie, vying.* "Tieing" is frequently to be seen in print, but has no warrant.

Final silent *e* is dropped before *ing (come, coming)* except in the following cases: (1) If the dropping of *e* would produce a participle of the same form as the participle of another verb not ending in *e,* the *e* is retained—*singe, singeing* and *dye, dyeing,* to prevent confusion with *sing, singing* and *die, dying.* This rule is often wrongly extended to verbs like *tinge* and *cringe,* but these participles should be *tinging* and *cringing.* (2) The *e* of *oe* verbs is retained: *canoeing, hoeing, shoeing, tiptoeing.*

The Principal Parts of Verbs

The present tense of the first person, the past tense, and the past participle are called the principal parts of a verb. Pupils learn them most easily by thinking: "Now I see; yesterday I saw; I have seen." The classification of verbs into two conjugations depends on the way their principal parts are formed.

The Two Conjugations of Verbs

The vast majority of verbs form the past tense and past participle by adding *d* or *ed*. These verbs are called "regular." In a few cases the *ed* ending has been somewhat altered: *had* instead of "haved," *made* instead of "maked," *did* instead of "doed."

With these regular verbs are classed the irregular verbs that form their past tense with *d* or *t* in the following ways: (1) Those that have the ending *d* in all three parts and merely shorten the vowel for the past tense; *bleed, bled; speed, sped.* (2) Those that add *t* for the past tense: *send, sent; creep, crept.* (3) Those that have the same form, ending in *t*, for all three parts: *hit, hit, hit; put, put, put.* All these verbs that have a past tense in *d* or *t* are classed together as the weak (or new) conjugation.

Verbs of the strong (or old) conjugation form the past tense by a vowel change *(draw, drew)*. Their past participle usually ends in *n (seen, drawn, driven)*, but may end otherwise: have *sung*, have *sunk*, have *come*, have *dug*, have *found*.

A few verbs have a past tense that is made according to the weak conjugation, and a participle that is made according to the strong conjugation: *do, did, done; go, went, gone.*

No ordinary mortal can hope to learn all about the principal parts of English verbs, for they are astonishingly variant, involved, sometimes dependent on meanings, sometimes unclassifiable. No one book of reference can be trusted to tell

the whole truth about principal parts. Teachers should be on their guard against pronouncing on the right or the wrong of past tenses and participles about which they have not thoroughly informed themselves. A good illustration of indeterminate principal parts is seen in this remark of the *Oxford Dictionary* about the parts of *stride:*

Perhaps (though this is far from certain) most people would give *strode, stridden* in answer to a grammatical question; but in actual speech and writing there is often hesitation as to the correct form. Our material includes hardly any 19th or 20th century examples of *stridden,* and not many of *strided.* . . . There seems to be a tendency to say *strided* ("I strided over the ditch").

The following list shows all the ordinary irregular principal parts of verbs, but does not include obsolete verbs like *mote* and *quoth,* nor such participles as *fraught* and *wrought,* which are no longer recognized as parts of the verbs *freight* and *work.*

List of Irregular Verbs

Forms in parentheses are less common or less acceptable.

PRESENT	PAST	PARTICIPLE
abide	abode (abided)	abode (abided, abidden)
am	was	been
arise	arose	arisen
awake	awoke or awaked	awaked or awoke

The participle *awoken* is much liked by pupils and has some vogue in England, but is generally regarded as erroneous in America.

be.	*See* am.	
bear	bore	borne

The participle *born,* originally a passive, is used intransitively in *was born,* etc.

beat	beat	beaten
beget	begot (old begat)	begotten

begin	began (old or illiterate begun)	begun
behold	beheld	beheld
bend	bent	bent
bereave	bereaved or bereft	bereaved or bereft
beseech	besought	besought

Beseeched was once proper, is still a favorite form with pupils, is not rare in recent literature, but is regarded as erroneous.

bestride. *See* stride.		
bet	bet	bet

Betted has become archaic, but is still sanctioned by the dictionaries.

beware (There are no other parts.)		
bid (to offer a price)	bid	bid
bid (to command, say farewell, etc.)	bade (bid)	bidden (bid)
bide (to abide)	bode, bided	bode, bided
bide (as in "bide one's time")	bided	bided

The forms of the two meanings of *bide* are much confused; the dictionaries give no clean-cut information; examples of usage are rare. Probably *bided* is the only past tense or past participle that sounds natural today for "bided his time."

bind	bound	bound
bite	bit	bitten
bleed	bled	bled
blend	blended	blended (blent)
blow	blew	blown
break	broke	broken
breed	bred	bred
bring	brought	brought
broadcast	broadcast or broadcasted	broadcast or broadcasted

The forms of *broadcast* in *ed* seem to be displacing the forms in *cast*.

build	built	built

Builded is archaic or poetical.

burn	burned or burnt	burned or burnt
burst	burst	burst
buy	bought	bought

The participle *boughten* does not appear in literature except as a playful or childish form.

can	could	
cast	cast	cast

The popularity of *broadcasted* influences pupils to use "casted."

catch	caught	caught
chide	chided or chid	chided or chidden
choose	chose	chosen
cleave (to split)	clove or cleaved	cloven or cleaved

The forms of *cleave* are various. The past tense may be *clave* or *cleft;* the participle may be *clove* (poetical) or *cleft.*

cleave (to stick to)

In this sense *cleave* is a regular verb, except that the archaic past tense *clave* is permissible.

cling	clung	clung
clothe	clothed or clad	clothed or clad
come	came	come
cost	cost	cost
could. *See* can.		
creep	crept	crept
crow	crowed (old crew)	crowed
cut	cut	cut
deal	dealt	dealt
dig	dug (old digged)	dug (old digged)
dive	dived or dove	dived

Dived seems to most pupils as archaic as *catched.*

do	did	done
draw	drew	drawn
dream	dreamed or dreamt	dreamed or dreamt
drink	drank	drunk

The past tense *drunk* and the participle *drank* have dictionary warrant, but are generally regarded as antiquated or illiterate.

drive	drove	driven
dwell	dwelt	dwelt

Dwelled is old; though still sanctioned by the dictionaries, it is practically obsolete.

eat	ate	eaten

The past tense of *eat* is a strange confusion. It is commonly pronounced *ĕt* (spelled *eat* or *ate*) in England, and this is considered good form by some fastidious Americans; but it seems a vulgarism to most Americans. Fowler actually calls *āte* wrong, though it is preferred by the *Oxford*. Those who use "et" for a past tense are likely to use it also as a participle, but this is not sanctioned by the English dictionaries.

fall	fell	fallen
feed	fed	fed
feel	felt	felt
fight	fought	fought
find	found	found
fit	fitted	fitted

The past tense and the participle *fit* (after the analogy of *hit, quit, slit,* etc.) are a recent form in American speech, though seldom seen in print. They are purely erroneous.

flee	fled	fled
fling	flung	flung
fly	flew	flown
forbear	forbore	forborne
forbid	forbade	forbidden (forbid)
forecast	forecast	forecast

Forecasted has long been used and is called proper by the dictionaries, but sounds like a mistake to many well-informed people.

forget	forgot	forgotten (forgot)
forsake	forsook	forsaken
freeze	froze	frozen
get	got	got or gotten

Most scholars prefer *got* for the participle and dislike *gotten,* but the majority of educated Americans seem to feel that *gotten* is more elegant.

give	gave	given
go	went	gone
grind	ground	ground

grow	grew	grown
hang	hung	hung

Hanged is the preferred form for execution by hanging, but *hung* is not erroneous.

have	had	had
hear	heard	heard
heave	heaved or hove	heaved or hove

The forms of *heave* vary with the meanings: He *hove* in sight, but he *heaved* a groan.

hew	hewed	hewed or hewn
hide	hid	hidden (hid)
hit	hit	hit
hold	held	held
hurt	hurt	hurt
keep	kept	kept
kneel	knelt or kneeled	knelt or kneeled
knit	knit or knitted	knit or knitted
know	knew	known
lay	laid	laid
lead	led	led
lean	leaned (leant)	leaned (leant)
leap	leaped (leapt)	leaped (leapt)
learn	learned or learnt	learned or learnt
leave	left	left
lend	lent	lent
let	let	let
lie	lay	lain
light	lighted or lit	lighted or lit
lose	lost	lost
make	made	made
may	might	
mean	meant	meant
meet	met	met
mow	mowed	mowed or mown
must	(There are no other	parts.)
ought	(There are no other	parts.)
pay	paid	paid
plead	pleaded	pleaded

Plead is regular, but there is dictionary warrant for *pled* or *plead* as a past tense and a participle.

prove	proved	proved (proven)

Proven is called incorrect by the books of reference, but has some literary warrant and should not be objected to.

put	put	put
quit	quit	quit

Quitted for the past tense and the participle is the preferred form in England and is entered in American dictionaries, but it is quite unknown to pupils.

read	read	read
reeve	reeved or rove	reeved or rove
rend	rent (rended)	rent (rended)

The opinions of the dictionaries about *rended* are amazingly contradictory.

rid	rid or ridded	rid or ridded
ride	rode	ridden
ring	rang	rung

The past tense *rung,* though entered in the dictionaries, is likely to seem a mark of ignorance.

rise	rose	risen
run	ran	run

The past tense *run* is almost unanimously condemned by the judges in *Current English Usage.*

saw	sawed	sawed or sawn
say	said	said
see	saw	seen
seek	sought	sought
sell	sold	sold
send	sent	sent
set	set	set
sew	sewed	sewed or sewn
shake	shook	shaken
shall	should	

Though *should* and *would* are, historically, the past tenses of *shall* and *will,* their meanings are so variant and so unrelated to *shall* and *will* that they are really separate verbs.

shave	shaved	shaved (shaven)

Shaven is only archaic or adjectival.

shear	sheared	sheared (shorn)

Shorn is only in figurative senses or adjectival.

shed	shed	shed
shine	shone	shone

In the sense of "shining shoes" only *shined* is possible.

shoe	shod	shod (shodden)

Shoed, applied to horses, is not erroneous; but it is not usual and not advisable.

shoot	shot	shot
should. *See* shall.		
show	showed	shown or showed
shred	shredded or shred	shredded or shred
shrink	shrank or shrunk	shrunk or shrunken

Shrunk as a past tense is somewhat like *sung* and *rung:* accredited, but dubious.

shrive	shrove or shrived	shriven or shrived
shut	shut	shut
sing	sang	sung

The past tense *sung* appears to be growing antiquated and to be regarded as vulgar.

sink	sank (sunk)	sunk (sunken)

Sunken is archaic or adjectival.

sit	sat	sat
slay	slew	slain
sleep	slept	slept
slide	slid	slid (slided, slidden)

Slided and *slidden* are practically obsolete.

sling	slung	slung
slink	slunk	slunk

The past tense *slank* is entered in the dictionaries, but not as a recommended form.

slit	slit	slit
smell	smelled or smelt	smelled or smelt

smite	smote	smitten
sow	sowed	sowed or sown
speak	spoke	spoken
speed	speeded or sped	speeded or sped

Sped is fast becoming archaic; it would be absurd if applied to speedometer readings.

spell	spelled or spelt	spelled or spelt
spend	spent	spent
spill	spilled or spilt	spilled or spilt
spin	spun	spun

The old past tense is *span,* which Fowler thinks is "likely to prevail"; but the evidence for this judgment is invisible in America.

spit	spit (spat)	spit

The old past tense *spat* is still in use.

split	split	split
spoil	spoiled or spoilt	spoiled or spoilt
spread	spread	spread
spring	sprang or sprung	sprung

The past tense *sprung* is regarded with somewhat the same disfavor (thought not so strong) as *sung* and *rung.*

stand	stood	stood
stave	staved or stove	staved or stove

Stove is usual for knocking a hole in; *staved* is usual for *stave off.*

stay	stayed	stayed

The verb *stay* is regular; the past tense *staid* is given by the dictionaries, but is antiquated and should not be allowed in school.

steal	stole	stolen
stick	stuck	stuck
sting	stung	stung
stink	stunk (stank)	stunk
strew	strewed	strewed or strewn
stride	strode	stridden

The parts of *stride* are curiously unsettled; *stridden* sounds unreal; *strided* seems to be coming into use for past tense and participle, and need not be objected to.

strike	struck	struck

Stricken is in use for the participial adjective.

string	strung	strung
strive	strove	striven

There is a tendency, which has some literary warrant, to use *strived.*

swear	swore	sworn
sweat	sweat (sweated)	sweat (sweated)
sweep	swept	swept
swell	swelled	swelled or swollen

The participle *swelled* sounds vulgar or unusable to most pupils.

swim	swam (swum)	swum

The past tense *swum* is now in disfavor.

swing	swung	swung
take	took	taken
teach	taught	taught
tear	tore	torn
tell	told	told
think	thought	thought
thrive	thrived or throve	thrived or thriven

Thriven seems to have become bookish and rather unreal.

throw	threw	thrown
thrust	thrust	thrust
tread	trod	trodden or trod
wake	waked or woke	waked or woke

Most American pupils strongly prefer the past tense *woke* and the participle *woken;* the past tense *waked* seems not to occur to them, and the participle *woke* sounds vulgar. *Woken* is not mentioned by American dictionaries, but the *Oxford* says that it has been in use for two centuries. The *Oxford* judges that *woken* is becoming obsolete, but the contrary seems to be true in America.

wear	wore	worn
weave	wove or weaved	woven or weaved
wed	wedded	wedded (wed)
weep	wept	wept
wet	wet or wetted	wet or wetted
whet	whetted (whet)	whetted (whet)

The past tense *whet* sounds archaic or vulgar, but is called proper by the dictionaries.

will. *See* shall.		
win	won	won
wind	wound	wound
would. *See* shall.		
wring	wrung	wrung
write	wrote	written

"Shall" and "Will"

It has always been customary for grammars to devote much space to the distinctions between *shall* and *will, should* and *would.* Jespersen uses 118 pages for these words; his judgment is this: *"I will* and *we will* may be used in a futuric sense, and in spite of the condemnation of grammarians this usage is constantly gaining ground. . . . The same use of *I would* is frequent in Scotch, Irish, and American, and is certainly spreading even in the South of England."

After Poutsma has outlined the standard distinctions supposed to be observed in literary English, he remarks: "Most non-English Britishers utterly fail in their attempts to conform to the rules laid down by English grammarians, and have long since given up distinguishing between *shall* and *will* so far as futurity is concerned. But it may also be doubted that the 'true-born Englishman,' even when he constantly moves in educated circles, strictly observes the rules even in his considered utterances. On the face of it, it seems incredible that he should be privileged, so to speak, with a sixth organ enabling him to tread unerringly in the maze of this bewildering problem."

Poutsma's skepticism is corroborated by so proficient a writer as James Norman Hall, who has confessed in the *Atlantic: "Shall* and *will, should* and *would,* remain, for me, the stumblingblocks they have always been."

Whitney, who felt that the distinctions were important, admitted as long ago as 1877 that "the people of the United

States have long been inaccurate in their use of the two auxiliaries, putting *will* often where the cultivated and approved idiom requires *shall;* and the inaccuracy has recently been greatly increasing in the United States."

Curme testifies: "Under the influence of the strong national drift, *will* and *would* often occur here [in the first person] also in the literary language of prominent Americans. . . . If the present widespread use of *will* in all three persons as a sign of the pure future should become finally established in the literary language, it would be a distinct gain to English expression."

Current English Usage, published by the National Council of Teachers of English, summarizes thus: "These comments show how unwilling experts are to dogmatise on the distinction (if any) between *shall* and *will*. The whole matter is at present surrounded by a cloud of uncertainty. The only thing about which there seems to be no doubt is that the hard and fast rules laid down by most rhetorics and handbooks are not to be relied on; probably what distinction ever has existed is gradually disappearing."

The rules formerly observed by careful American writers for expressing futurity were as follows:

For the first person, to express mere statement of fact, use *shall* and *should:* "I shall be glad to see you; I should like to hear it; we should be unwilling to do so."

For the second and third persons, to express mere statement of fact, use *will* and *would:* "You will find it there; he will be welcome."

For the first person, to express desire, determination, or assurance, use *will* and *would:* "I will not tolerate such interference; yes, I will remember; I would not be guilty of an imperfect enumeration; we would die for him."

For the second and third person, to express the speaker's authority, use *shall:* "You shall not go unpunished; it shall be just as I say."

In second-person questions use the form that is expected in the answer: "Shall you be free by noon? (Yes, I shall be.)"

The guiding principle that gives pupils the best clue is this: Use *shall* and *should* with *I* and *we,* especially if you speak of what is contrary to the wish of the subject. "I will be unhappy" means (according to the rules) "I am resolved to be unhappy." The most common need for *shall* and *should* is with *glad, happy, like,* etc.: "I shall be glad, we should like."

Teachers should realize that some of the most distinguished Americans of the twentieth century have been unable, or unwilling, to follow even the simplest requirement for *shall.* President Theodore Roosevelt wrote: "I certainly would not be willing." President Taft wrote: "We would run no risk of deceiving" to express the idea that, as a matter of fact, there would be no risk. President Wilson—the most academic and literary man who has lived in the White House—was utterly regardless of *shall* and *should,* but expressed himself thus: "We will sink back into a period of struggle; I will be obliged to regard it as a rejection." A *Literary Digest* editorial, of a most solemn sort, was once couched in these terms: "We would be false to every instinct of humanity if we did not urge our readers to consider these facts."

Teachers should not be guided by a crusading spirit, a desire to restore the vanishing *shall* and *should.* They should be guided only by the answer to one query: "In the face of the evidence, what are the chances that I shall accomplish anything by devoting time to cultivating *shall* and *should?"*

SECTION 2: NOUNS

Classes of Nouns

Nouns are divided into four classes: proper, common, abstract, and collective.

1. Proper nouns. The customary definition of a proper noun is "a word (or set of words) used as the individual name of a person, place, or thing, written with a capital letter." This has served pretty well for school purposes, and teachers will be well advised not to go beyond it in school.

But they should understand how incomplete the definition is. *Thomas* is a name common to hundreds of thousands of persons; *Berlin* is a name common to twenty-six cities and towns in the United States. On the other hand, the noun *earth* is the name of only one thing in the universe, yet we are advised by good authority not to capitalize it. But the name of every other planet must be capitalized. The name of a genus of animals—for example, *Canis*—is usually considered a proper noun and capitalized; the name of one of the species included in *Canis,* though more individual than the genus, is not considered a proper noun. It is customary to capitalize *river* and *street* in *Mississippi River* and *Fourth Street,* but there is also good usage in favor of not capitalizing *river* and *street. Nature* is regarded as a proper noun in a great many books, but as a common noun in a great many other books. And so on endlessly. Truly the Chicago *Manual for Writers* was wise when it said: "There is probably no subject covered by this book about which ideas of good form will be found to differ more widely than that of capitalization."

The world is unanimously agreed that proper nouns should be capitalized and that a capital is the distinguishing mark

of a proper noun, but there is no agreement as to what a proper noun is. In this chaotic state of usage teachers should not take too seriously the subject of capitalization—which is often spoken of in textbooks and courses of study as if it were on a par with punctuation. It is a small matter, almost negligible in comparison with punctuation.

The only safe guide for capitalization in school is to limit the requirements to those cases in which usage is completely settled: (1) Names of persons, with the titles: *Robert, James C. Calhoun, Mr. Bennett, Dr. Shambaugh, Captain Hall, President Monroe.* (2) Names of places: *Atlanta, France, Illinois, Province of Quebec, Madison County, Boothbay Harbor.* (3) Names of peoples: *Americans, Russians,* an *Eskimo,* a *Peruvian.* (4) Names of languages: *English, German, Spanish, Latin.* (It is common practice to capitalize the names of other subjects in a curriculum: History, Algebra, etc.; but usage is not settled.) (5) The principal words in the names of books, poems, or articles: *Bible, The Cloister and the Hearth, The Psalm of Life, "The Forgotten Man."* (6) The names of sections of a country: the *West,* the *South,* the *Pacific Coast.* (7) The names of parties and religions: *Democrats, Presbyterians, Mohammedans.* There are many other classes of nouns that are usually regarded as proper, but they are somewhat disputable, subject to exceptions, and not common in school writing.

2. Common nouns. A common noun is a name that is common to all the objects of its kind: *finger, tray, pebble, bush, cup, cliff, planet, atom, earthquake.*

Certain words are on the border line between common nouns and pronouns: *nothing, something, somebody, anything, anybody.* One dictionary calls *anything* a noun; another calls it a pronoun. For school purposes any doubtful word should be called a noun; a word should be called a pronoun only if it is obviously used in place of a noun and is listed as a pronoun in all grammars.

3. **Abstract nouns.** An abstract noun is the name of a quality or condition; it usually names something that could be expressed by a noun ending in *ness: wideness, healthiness, truth, honor, degradation, falsity, beauty, height, absence, dishonesty.* The distinction between abstract and common nouns cannot be clearly drawn. For instance, *place* may refer to a village and be a concrete common noun, or it may refer to a mere position and be abstract. *Color* can be called common if it names a dab of red, or abstract if it names this general quality of matter. Is *tumult* common or abstract? No one can say. No one would be any wiser if he could say.

4. **Collective nouns.** A collective noun is the name of a group of individuals: *crowd, swarm, herd, audience, party, family, team, army.*

5. **Compound nouns.** A noun composed of two words may be called a compound noun: *bathroom, policeman, forget-me-not, dining-car.* A compound noun may originate as two separate words, *camera man;* these may become hyphenated, *camera-man;* and if the combination becomes very common, it may grow into a solid word, *cameraman.* Compound nouns are interesting philologically, but are of no significance in grammar.

Gender of Nouns

The European languages have an arbitrary distinction called "gender" which requires that the nouns should be modified by the adjective forms that are used for male, female, or for non-sexual things. For instance, in German the noun *sonne* (sun) is feminine; the noun *mond* (moon) is masculine; the noun *weib* (woman) is neuter. An American who studies German can hardly get away from associating these genders with sex, but a German does not think of sex. Gender is for him just an arbitrary fact about each noun. Gender is a mere matter of grammar.

The English language has no grammatical genders. If we refer to the moon as "she," we are personifying it; we think of it as a female. If we speak of the sun as "he," we are making it male by a kind of personification. If we speak of a woman as "it," we have gone far beyond the bounds of grammar. If we choose to say that *bull* is masculine, cow is *feminine,* and *stick* is neuter, we shall be following a respectable old tradition; but we shall not be accomplishing anything. We may speak of *actress, empress,* or *waitress* as feminine nouns, but in fact these are simply nouns that refer to women; they have no true feminine genders.

Possessives of Nouns

The singular possessive is formed by adding an apostrophe and *s: Harold's, ship's, lady's, St. James's, Keats's, Dickens's.* The difficulty of training pupils to keep the apostrophe *outside of* the names that end in *s* is quite inconceivable to inexperienced teachers. Indeed the wrong possessive of these names is not rare in reputable books. "Keat's" occurs in Fosdick's *Modern Use of the Bible,* page 174. "Dicken's" has been printed on the cover of a school edition of *Oliver Twist.* Only long persistence can train a class to put the apostrophe *beyond* names like *Holmes, Jones,* and *Mr. Williams.*

Throughout the nineteenth century the usual rule for forming a possessive singular of nouns ending in *s* was to use the apostrophe only; and this is still favored by elderly or conservative people, and by people who dislike such sounds as *Moses's,* or *Socrates's.* But usage has steadily grown stronger in favor of the uniform *'s* for all nouns. The *Literary Digest* prints *Cedar Rapids's own painter;* Fowler uses *The London Times's;* the New York *Times* uses *the United States's adhesion.*

It is still customary to use the apostrophe only with nouns ending in an *s* sound when they come before *sake: for good-*

ness' sake, for conscience' sake; but S. P. Sherman wrote "experience for experience's sake."

If a noun ends in a silent *s,* like *Illinois* or *Descartes,* it is not sensible to use an apostrophe only; the *s* should be added to show the sound that would be made in speaking the possessive: *Illinois's, Descartes's.*

The apostrophe is put at the end of a full title or phrasal name: "his brother Wilbur's car, her brother-in-law's will, in James the Second's time, the mayor-elect's proposal, anybody else's vote." This principle is extended to a pair of names that denote joint possession, especially in firm names: "Houghton and Willoughby's cutlery, Herbert and Elsa's father" (if they have the same father). But beyond such an obviously joint possession it is unsafe to go; note the two possessives in each of the following sentences: "Lord Selborne complained of Lloyd George's and Mr. Churchill's combined invective" (from Poutsma). "Such an effort as Balzac's and Zola's, both of whom attempted to give a complete picture."

It has long been a dictum in textbooks that a possessive of inanimate things ought not to be used, except in the case of certain well-established idioms like *the day's work, a stone's throw, at arm's length.* The rule may be wise with respect to some expressions like *the house's roof, the bus's steering-gear, the rug's design;* but beyond this very narrow bound literature gives no warrant for the rule. Anyone who cares to spend time investigating inanimate possessives can find in good books numberless examples of this sort: "society's organ, the system's product, the Act's chief end, the word's alphabetical place (Fowler), the ink's color, a London house's library, scarlet fever's symptoms, the bay's mouth, the box's cover."

The plural possessive is formed in two ways. (1) If the plural does not end in *s,* an apostrophe and *s* is added: *women's, children's.* This rule has been extended to such forms as *alumnae's, mice's, geese's.* But these are so bizarre

that they are generally avoided. (2) If a plural ends in *s*, the possessive is formed by adding an apostrophe: *boys'*, *Indians'*, *Joneses'*, *Phelpses'*. Pupils are never sure about possessive plurals unless they are taught to think of two steps in the formation: first, form the plural; second, form the possessive according to the rule.

Plurals of Nouns

Most nouns form their plurals by adding *s: wreaths, cogs, trees.* The exceptions to this general rule are as follows:

1. Plurals formed by a vowel change. Some nouns form their plurals by a vowel change: *men, children, geese, mice, teeth, feet.*

2. Identical singular and plural forms. Some nouns have the same form for the plural as for the singular: *sheep, deer, fish* (except for the kinds of fishes), *folk, offspring,* and usually *cannon* and *heathen.* These unchanged plurals are a wide and wayward lot, not reducible to rule or reason. For example, there is a strong tendency to use *pair* as a plural, and authors have so used it for centuries, but this is not sanctioned; on the other hand, the plural *folk* is considered the correct plural, and *folks* somewhat dialectical. *Biscuit* is used as a plural by manufacturers, but is unknown to the dictionaries. Some biologists use *sperm* as a plural.

Names of animals, when spoken of as game, more often than not have unchanged plurals: *partridge, pickerel, grouse, quail, moose.* A hunter, writing a magazine article, would be as likely to use *duck* as *ducks* for a plural; more likely to use *pigeons* than *pigeon,* almost sure to use *snipe,* and almost equally sure to use *eels.* One man (Sattler) who made an extended study of these plurals of game animals found only *shrimps;* but in a *Times* book-review is "oysters, clams, and *shrimp.*" Teachers should waste no time in correcting or arguing about these evasive plurals.

Names of races and tribes commonly have unchanged plurals. The following occur in three consecutive pages of Sumner and Keller's *Science of Society: Chuvash, Tlinkit, Bageshu, Kavirondo, Akamba, Somal, Koryak.* Mingled with these are three *s* plurals: *Votyaks, Dinkas, Kabyles.* In a *Scientific American* article *Blackfoot* and *Algonkins* are both plurals. Ethnographers can give no account of why or when they use one form of plural rather than the other.

Poutsma, Volume 3, devotes 165 pages to plurals of nouns. Anyone who cares to wander in this maze will find many amusing plurals: *rhinoceros, knockers-up, apparatus, Brazils, United States.*

3. Nouns ending in a sibilant sound. If a noun ends in a sibilant sound (s, z, sh, ch, x), *e* is inserted before *s: hisses, fezes, bushes, patches, sexes.*

4. One-syllable nouns ending in *s* or *z*. A few one-syllable nouns that end in *s* or *z* preceded by a single vowel form plurals that are not yet reduced to settled usage. The consonant is often doubled. But the plural of *gas* has always been *gases,* and presumably the other words of this type will be conformed to that model. Assurances have been given from the offices of the three American dictionaries that in forthcoming revisions the plural of *bus* will be given as *buses*—a form which has been growing in favor since the word became common. The following plurals are therefore preferable: *gases, buses, pluses, puses, fezes, quizes.*

5. Nouns ending in *y* preceded by a consonant. The plurals of nouns ending in a *y* that is preceded by a consonant are formed by changing *y* to *i* and adding *es: fly, flies; trophy, trophies; deity, deities.* This rule applies also to nouns ending in *quy: soliloquies.* An exception to the rule is proper names, which are usually (but not always) formed by adding *s: Henrys, Marys, little Italys.* An occasional noun of this type that has been recently manufactured

or that is used in a special sense may form its plural by adding *s: drys, bys* (in sports).

6. Nouns ending in *o* preceded by a vowel. All nouns ending in *o* preceded by a vowel form their plurals regularly by adding *s: cameos, radios, yahoos.*

Most nouns ending in *o* preceded by a consonant may also form regular plurals: *banjos, dynamos, pianos, quartos, solos, tuxedos.* But a few nouns that have been long in the language and that have familiar plurals are more commonly written with a plural in *oes,* like *heroes* and *potatoes.* These *oes* plurals will cause confusion and waste of time for a teacher who regards them as the normal type. The fact is that they are exceptional and old-fashioned. The tide of usage has run strongly against them in the twentieth century. If anything is said about them to a class, the rule should be given thus: Always form the plurals in *os* unless you know a definite reason for *oes.* There is dictionary authority for the *os* plural of every *o* noun except the following: *dominoes* (the game), *echo, go, hero, jo, negro, no, potato, tomato, tornado, torpedo.* (And Poutsma puts *tornado* and *torpedo* in his list of nouns that may have either plural.) There is seldom any need of speaking about *oes* plurals except to discourage them; most pupils like to insert the *e* and are prone to make wrong *oes* plurals. The following Discussion will provide a teacher with full information about this vexatious subject.

Discussion of Plurals in "oes"

In the *Century Dictionary* there are 1505 nouns that end in *o* preceded by a consonant, and at least 40 more could be added from other sources. The great majority of these are either imported names of plants, animals, coins, and genera, or recent technical terms, or obsolete; some have no plurals, and some have only foreign plurals; not more than 250 of them are known to an ordinary educated person. Of all these nouns only 74 are said by any dictionary to have an *oes* plural. They are as follows:

ambuscado, archipelago, armadillo, bastinado, bilbo, bravado, bravo, bubo, buffalo, calico, cargo, catalo, commando, crusado, dado, dago, desperado, dido, dodo, domino, dominoes (the game), *echo, embargo, fiasco, flamingo, fresco, gecko, gingko, go, grotto, halo, hero, hobo, imago, indigo, innuendo, jingo, jo, lasso, lingo, magnifico, mango, manifesto, memento, mirligo, Morisco, mosquito, motto, mulatto, negro, no, outgo, palisado, palmetto, paterero, peccadillo, pintado, portico, potato, proviso, stalko, stiletto, strappado, stucco, sybo, tomato, tornado, torpedo, tyro, vertigo, veto, virago, volcano, zero.*

Dictionaries differ amazingly in their judgments about *os* and *oes.* The *International* and the *Oxford* usually favor *oes.* So strong is the bias of the *International* that in the 1925 edition it recommended ten *oes* plurals which are not even mentioned by any other dictionary. The *Century* and Fowler's *Modern English Usage* consistently favor *os;* the *Standard* is between these extremes. A few examples of how the dictionaries contradict each other will be useful. In the *Century* the only plurals allowed for *dado, dingo,* and *embargo* are *os,* but in the *International* the only plurals given are *oes.* The *Oxford* gives only *oes* for *proviso* and *stiletto,* but no other dictionary even mentions an *oes* plural. The *International* gives only *intermezzi,* though *intermezzos* is given by three other dictionaries.

It should be understood that if any dictionary does not definitely recommend a plural form, it is indicating that *os* is the proper plural. It should also be understood that a dictionary which recommends only one form of plural may give quotations in which the other form appears; for example, the *Oxford* shows *negros* in four quotations, but does not sanction that plural for modern use. One or another of the five dictionaries recommends an *os* plural for all but 11 of the 74 nouns—unless one cares to argue about *mirligoes, stalkoes,* and *syboes.* Hence it is fair to conclude that *os* is the best to recommend in school.

There is no disagreement among dictionaries about recent *o* nouns: all dictionaries agree that these nouns should have only an *os* plural. The youngest noun that is entitled to *oes* in the judgment of any dictionary is *hobo,* which first appeared in print about 1890.

It seems unlikely that the world will bother itself a great many years longer with *oes* plurals that are illogical, that are not agreed upon, and that grow increasingly antiquated. The course of usage has run so steadily in favor of *os* that in 1925 the Princeton Press announced in its *Handbook of Style* that it would no longer use *oes* for any nouns. The Press had to retreat from this advanced position because of protests, but no doubt the time will come when the Press can again take the position and remain there. Teachers should keep that likelihood in mind when they prepare pupils for conformity with coming usage.

7. Certain nouns ending in *f* or *fe*. Thirteen nouns that end in *f* or *fe* have plurals in *ves: calves, elves, halves, knives, leaves, lives, loaves, selves, sheaves, shelves, thieves, wives, wolves.* All other *f* nouns may have proper plurals that are regularly formed. *Beeves* and *wharves* are perhaps more common than *beefs* and *wharfs. Scarves* and *hooves* are antiquated, and *staves* is antiquated except as a musical term.

8. Plurals of letters and figures. Plurals of letters and figures may be formed with an apostrophe and *s:* "b's and P's; the 1850's." (But the apostrophe is not necessary.) The plurals of words used as mere words may be formed with an apostrophe and *s:* "three *on's* in one line." But the apostrophe is not needed for words and is going out of favor. Fowler speaks of "the *sos* in 3." The *Atlantic* has printed "the 1860s" without an apostrophe. Any effort to form the plural of a name with an apostrophe (Jones' or Chambers') is unwarranted and unintelligible.

9. Plurals of compound nouns. Plurals of compound nouns are usually formed regularly, by adding *s* to the end: *spoonfuls, handfuls, stock-exchanges.* But if the latter part of the compound is felt as a mere modifier, the *s* may be added to the noun part: *sons-in-law, lookers-on, courts-martial.*

10. Foreign plurals. An English plural of foreign nouns is usually proper and should seldom be questioned in pupils' writing: *hippopotamuses, curriculums, memorandums, formulas,*

nebulas. But in a few cases English plurals have not yet been accepted. For *Mr.* and *Mrs.* we have to use the French plurals, *Messrs.* and *Mesdames*. For *alumna* and *alumnus* we have to use *alumnae* and *alumni*. For a few Latin and Greek words a plural in *a* is considered necessary: *bacteria, data, phenomena, strata*. But a pupil need not be corrected for such English plurals as *bacteriums, bacilluses, genuses, larvas, stratums, radiuses*. It is sometimes advisable to explain that *species* is both a singular and a plural.

11. No plurals possible. There is no authentic device for making English plurals of words that end in a silent *s: Dumas, Louis, patois, rendezvous*. To add *es*, as in "Louises," (which is sometimes done) indicates that the *s* is sounded. The only possible plurals are the French plurals, which are the same as the singulars.

SECTION 3: PRONOUNS

There are five classes of pronouns: personal, demonstrative, indefinite, interrogative, relative.

1. The personal pronouns are as follows:

FIRST PERSON

I, my or mine, me — we, our or ours, us

SECOND PERSON

you, your or yours, you

SECOND PERSON, OLD

thou, thy or thine, thee — ye, your or yours, you

THIRD PERSON

he, his, him
she, her or hers, her
it, its, it
— they, their or theirs, them

Compound personals are formed with *self* and *selves: myself, thyself, yourself, yourselves, himself, herself, itself, themselves.*

2. There are only two demonstratives, *this* and *that,* with their plurals, *these* and *those.*

3. The indefinites are: *all, another, any, anyone, both, each, either, few, many, more, most, much, neither, none, one, other, same, several, some, someone, such.*

There is no objection to including among the indefinites *aught, naught, anybody, everybody, nobody, somebody, anything,* etc. But these are more usually, and preferably, classed as nouns.

4. The interrogative pronouns are *who (whose* and *whom), which, what.* In older style *whatever* was used as an interrogative, and *whoever* is still sometimes so used.

5. The relative pronouns are *that, who (whose* and *whom), which,* and *what,* with the compounds (called indefinite relatives) *whoever, whichever, whatever.*

SECTION 4: ADJECTIVES

Classes of Adjectives

1. Descriptive adjectives. Most adjectives are descriptive: *small, round, white, peculiar, good, hot, extraordinary, level, sandy, smooth, intolerable, anxious, real, bare,* etc.

A descriptive adjective that is derived from a proper noun is called a proper adjective and is written with a capital: *Spanish, Virginian, African, Norman, Shakesperian, Napoleonic.* If a proper adjective comes into such general use that we are no longer conscious of its origin, it may lose its capital: *macadam* road, *galvanic* battery, *platonic* friendship.

2. Indefinite adjectives. The words used as indefinite pronouns (except *anyone, someone,* and *none*) may be used as adjectives, and are then called indefinite adjectives: *any* person, *both* toys, *some* butter.

3. Numeral adjectives. A word that limits a noun by expressing number is called a numeral adjective: *two* streets, a *hundred* persons, a *dozen* papers, *several* portions, the *third* choice.

4. Interrogative adjectives. If an interrogative word modifies a noun, it is an interrogative adjective: "*What* difference does it make? *Which* one do you mean?"

5. Possessive adjectives. If possessive nouns and pronouns are classed as adjectives, they may be called possessive adjectives: *his* property, a *man's* home. (See pages 164, 208.)

6. The articles. *A, an,* and *the* are a kind of adjective and are called "articles." *The* is the definite article: *a* and *an* are the indefinite articles.

A is used before words beginning with a consonant (except silent *h*), a long *u* (a university), or an *h* (a hotel). It was formerly customary to use *an* before a long *u* or an *h* if the word was not accented on its first syllable (an university and an hotel), but usage now favors *a*. *An* is used before words

that begin with a vowel (except long *u*—a universal custom), a silent *h* (an hour ago), or a vowel sound (an *f* string).

7. **Participles.** Participles are often indistinguishable from pure adjectives and may well be called adjectives: *chagrined, barefooted, molten, trifling.*

The Comparison of Adjectives

There are said to be three "degrees of comparison" of adjectives: the positive (the uninflected form, like *pleasant*), the comparative *(pleasanter* or *more pleasant),* and the superlative *(pleasantest* or *most pleasant).* The choice between adding *er* and *est* or prefixing *more* and *most* is somewhat a matter of length: a short adjective like *hot* is more often compared with *er* and *est;* a long adjective like *unreasonable* is compared with *more* and *most,* because the forms with *er* and *est* would sound grotesque. But the shortest adjectives are properly compared with *more* and *most:* "more sad than I, most glad to see you." Two-syllable adjectives are not infrequently compared with *er* and *est: handsomer, profoundest.* A few three-syllable adjectives may be compared with *er* and *est: unhappier, unhealthiest.* Most adjectives of three syllables and all longer adjectives could not be seriously compared with *er* and *est.*

SECTION 5: ADVERBS

Classes of Adverbs

Adverbs may be divided according to their meanings into eleven classes. These are, of course, so inexact as to be almost meaningless. For example, *generally* would be called an adverb of manner, but may refer to time, or could be classed as modal in some of its meanings. The classification by meaning has no significance as grammar, but may be useful for purposes of display.

1. **Adverbs of manner.** These form the most numerous group, are the most typical, and include most of the adverbs in *ly: afoot, afresh, akimbo, fast, hard, headlong, ill, otherwise, right, thus, well, wrong, actively, boldly, calmly, dangerously, easily, formally, gladly, heavily, idly, jauntily, knowingly, lovingly, murderously, naturally, oddly, playfully, queerly, readily, softly, timidly, universally, vividly, wildly, zealously.*

2. **Adverbs of time:** *Afterwards, always, before, finally, formerly, henceforth, later, meanwhile, never, now, nowadays, often, once, presently, seldom, since, sometimes, soon, still, straightway, then, today, yesterday.*

3. **Adverbs of place:** *Ahead, aloft, along, away, backwards, below, close, crossways, down, everywhere, far, forward, here, hereabouts, homeward, in, nowhere, off, out, sidewise, there, up, upstairs, upward.*

4. **Adverbs of degree:** *About, all* (all over), *almost, any, as, doubly, enough, entirely, exactly, greatly, hardly, just, least, less, little, merely, more, most, much, partly, pretty* (pretty nearly), *quite, rather, scarcely, shortly, simply, slightly, so, somewhat, sooner, too, twice* (twice as high), *very, utterly, wholly.*

5. **Modal adverbs.** Modal adverbs qualify a statement by giving it some kind of emphasis: making it stronger, show-

ing the reason for it, showing the degree of its truth, etc. They are sometimes called "sentence adverbs," because they add a shade of meaning to the whole statement. Most of them modify a verb by showing the relation of its meaning to a previous statement. These are thought-connecters, and therefore tend to become conjunctions; some of the words in the following list are used as conjunctions: *accordingly, also, anyhow, apparently, assuredly, besides, certainly, consequently, doubtless, else, evidently, hence, however, indeed, maybe, moreover, nevertheless, not, only, otherwise, perhaps, possibly, presumably, probably, so, still, surely, therefore, thus, yet.*

6. **Intensive adverbs:** *else* (There is nothing else to do), *especially, even, only, whatever.* (Also many adverbs of degree can be called intensives—for example, *all, merely, quite, simply, very.*)
7. **Interrogative adverbs:** *how, when, where, why.*
8. **Interjectional adverbs:** *now, well, why.*
9. **Responsive adverbs:** *no, yes.*
10. **Expletive adverb:** *there.*
11. **Introductory adverbs:** *namely, viz.*

The Comparison of Adverbs

Very few adverbs which do not end in *ly* can be compared. The following are compared regularly with *er* and *est: fast, hard, late, soon. Far* is compared *farther, farthest,* (or *further, furthest*). *Seldom* can be compared with *more* and *most.* The degrees of *well* are expressed by *better* and *best;* the degrees of *ill* or *badly* are expressed by *worse* and *worst.* The *ly* adverbs are compared with *more* and *most: more gladly, most gladly.*

SECTION 6: ABBREVIATIONS AND CONTRACTIONS

An abbreviation is usually the first letter, or first few letters, of a word, followed by a period: B. C. (before Christ), *Ill.* (Illinois), *Co.* (company), *Ave.* (avenue), *Esq.* (esquire), *Hon.* (honorable), *Rev.* (reverend).

A contraction is usually a shortened form of a word, written with an apostrophe to show where letters are omitted, and not followed by a period: *can't* (cannot), *I'll* (I will), *it's* (it is), *m'f'g* (manufacturing), *ass'n* (association).

The distinction is not maintained. For example, the official abbreviation of *Massachusetts* is *Mass.*, the first four letters, followed by a period; but the abbreviation of *Kentucky* is *Ky.*, the first and the last letter, with no apostrophe. Some abbreviations of names of persons are contractions written without an apostrophe: *Wm.*, *Chas.*, *Jas.* Titles are sometimes contractions written without an apostrophe: *Dr.*, *Mr.*, *Jr.*, *Sr.*, *Lt.* But one rule is always observed: Do not use both an apostrophe and a period. A shortened form should be regarded either as an abbreviation with a period or as a contraction with an apostrophe.

Note on *I'll* or *I'd*. It is stated in several books of reference that *I'll* and *I'd* "cannot be" contractions of *I shall* and *I should*. Jespersen says that the *sh* sound "never disappears." The answer is that many scholars and writers have often made it disappear. For example, H. L. Mencken (author of *The American Language* and a professed admirer of Jespersen) once used *I'd* four times on one page: "I'd sleep more peacefully, I'd like to see, I'd rejoice to hear, I'd like to see." When he was asked what *I'd* stood for, he replied that it meant *I should,* and added, "Certainly the use of *I'd* as an abbreviation of *I should* has tremendous authority behind it." Anyone who cares for evidence may

gather an unlimited amount by keeping watch for *I'll* and *I'd* in the periodicals and asking the writers what their contractions represent. Krapp is unquestionably right in saying (*Comprehensive Guide to Good English,* page 533), "The abbreviation *'ll* may stand for either *shall* or *will*." Whether *shall* and *should* ought to be contracted in this way is quite another matter, but to say that the *sh* sound never disappears is to deny a multitude of facts. To prove the contractions improper would be impossible, in view of all the actual usage and all the weight of opinion that endorses them.

PART FIVE

SENTENCES FOR EXERCISE

The first hundred sentences contain a complete display of all types of verb forms. Sentences 101-125 are simple. Sentences 126-150 illustrate verbals. Sentences 151-190 exhibit subordinate clauses in complex sentences. Sentences 191-210 are compound. Sentences 211-250 are a miscellaneous lot, including a number of elliptical sentences that are not grammatically complete.

EXERCISES

Sentences Illustrating Verb Forms

1. I never send more than one at a time.
2. We have always been very fond of him.
3. Norman had seldom been so surprised.
4. Mr. Talbot, closing one eye, squinted at it.
5. She had delivered it the previous morning.
6. The firemen had been ordered not to enter the room in the basement.
7. May I come in?
8. It shall be sent at once.
9. Don't go yet.
10. The cashier was going to call him back.
11. Did the woman at the end of the line get a ticket?
12. Is there any objection to the minutes?
13. Hasn't the postman come yet?
14. Surely they must have been glad to see you.
15. Oh, things might be worse.
16. You are wanted on the phone.
17. Am I going to be invited to your party?
18. Have they been angry at me?
19. They have been looking at me for several seconds.
20. We shall be in no danger.
21. They were shaking their fists at the radiator.
22. You should never act suspicious.
23. I shall probably leave before eleven.
24. Men must qualify by a rigorous examination before they are put on the waiting-list.
25. The desk should be crated and shipped at once.
26. I may have met him before—how should I know?
27. Doesn't he ever look at you while you are speaking to him?
28. He has, it seems to me, been away quite long enough.
29. I had been waiting so long that I was afraid I had missed him.
30. Aren't you aware that he *did* acknowledge them?
31. The printed slips may be enclosed in the letters.
32. We shall be looking for you.

33. The messenger is standing just outside the gate.
34. Probably the girls have never in their lives heard such a sound.
35. You might look again.
36. These letters must all be mailed before five.
37. The children may, however, be learning more than you think.
38. Can you be on time tomorrow?
39. The difficulty might have been serious.
40. You might better have bought two dozen while you were about it.
41. Can you deliver another one soon?
42. Wouldn't he like to join us?
43. Can Percival have been the one who did it?
44. I haven't another one in the house.
45. Perhaps that might be better.
46. Such conduct is not tolerated in our community.
47. You can be wrapping up the parcels while I am entertaining the children.
48. The matter will be attended to immediately.
49. The house is now being painted for the ninth time.
50. Nothing more was ever heard of the fellow.
51. Why, little matters like that can be handled at odd times.
52. He could, at least, have acted more politely.
53. Such a question could be interpreted in two ways.
54. The heiress was being trained in all the graces.
55. They would have been swamped with orders if they had been trained properly.
56. Can his letter have been addressed to Holt Street?
57. I supposed the pictures would be taken with a flash.
58. The mothers might have been waiting there yet.
59. That kind of argument has been heard too often.
60. Some farmers must be expecting a great deal of help from the government.
61. By the end of the week we shall again be in danger.
62. There probably could be some better solution.
63. Could a gentleman act like that?
64. The boys would soon be swarming all over the grounds.
65. The audience will have been put to sleep by that time.
66. You must have been calling the wrong number.
67. Shouldn't these clothes have been sent to the cleaner's?
68. Mr. Price will have completed his tabulations before dinner-time.
69. You should have been learning some trade.

70. Probably he will have been sent to jail before he is old enough to vote.

71. That will seem good.

72. But—don't you see?—he may have been misinformed.

73. Lotta may have been at school.

74. The two ladies would have been paying closer attention if they had had better judgment.

75. Much will have to be altered before the picture will be fit for exhibition.

76. Some of you could be unloading the coal.

77. I have never had such an experience.

78. They might be using their time to better advantage.

79. There may, perhaps, be better news by that time.

80. Our sacrifices should have been greater, but they will not have been in vain.

81. A handkerchief might have been tucked into the crack.

82. In spite of his illness I had confidence that he would be able to pay.

83. While I do my errands, you could be raking up the leaves.

84. If I had had my say, there would have been more money left.

85. Do you believe that Mr. Ray can have failed to read the report?

86. You should not have hoped for such luck.

87. I was assured by the clerk that the parcel would be shipped without delay.

88. By this time some preliminary reports should be coming in.

89. They would have worn heavier shoes if they had known how rough the trail was.

90. The audience should be quiet if it wants to hear what he is saying.

91. The joke must have been told very poorly.

92. There couldn't have been a reply that would please me better.

93. Dr. Cook may have been expecting a much more serious trouble.

94. You must have thought the red curtain would be attractive.

95. The basket could have been emptied without the least trouble.

96. If it were a wee bit larger, it would fit.

97. Don't be too sure of that.

98. Through Mombasa must pass everything required by the hinterland of some 500,000 square miles, with a native population of perhaps 10,000,000 and a railway system of about 1,250 miles, together with a system of lake vessels numbering about a dozen craft of various sizes.

99. I realized that I must act at once, and so dived into what was called our "cabin"—though no one had ever slept in it.

100. This rude shelter—at that date hidden in the deep woods far from the nearest habitation—was for a time the refuge of two of the judges responsible for the death of Charles I in 1640.

Simple Sentences

101. In her imagination she was walking down the street, alone, hatless, wearing a beautiful, fluttery dress, going into the bank and straight up to the teller's window to speak to Mr. Frey about something important.

102. He enters this room, moves quietly into the gun room, selects from the wall a knife, secretes this, perhaps, under his coat, then turns and passes out of this building, along the narrow sidewalk, and so on to the steps of his own cottage.

103. Saddled horses stood at the hitch-rails, with here and there a freight wagon or a buckboard.

104. The men in the library looked wildly about, like rats in a trap, seeking a means of exit, then rapidly left the room.

105. Val walked through the deserted room, still thick with cigar-smoke, and went downstairs to report to the lieutenant in charge of the Eighteenth Squad.

106. The ancient Hittite Empire not only included all of modern Asia Minor, but extended southward into Syria.

107. He was an old, self-indulgent man by that time, surrounded by parasites, female admirers, bric-a-brac, old books, and old prints.

108. In its endeavors to increase the demand for this low-priced and excellent food fish, the United States Bureau of Fisheries changed the name to grayfish, with gratifying results.

109. The bedroom was enormous, the walls being paneled in old wood and hung with pieces of old colored leather—leather with scrolls and designs in gilt.

110. Alterations in documents—such as changed dates, elimination of words or sentences, and fraudulently added matter—may sometimes be shown with startling clearness.

111. I stayed in camp the rest of that day and had one of the camel men cook "cabobs"—slices of meat with alternate layers of fat between, held over glowing coals on a ramrod.

112. Through the haze of early morning a lone figure in a skiff is dipping up fish from his box, then climbs a steep slope to his shack in a clearing on the upper level.

113. The town of Melita, on the border line between the states of Washington and Idaho, was the terminus of a branch railway, forty

miles from the main-line junction, with two mixed freight and passenger trains a day.

114. The trip from Nigerelorie to Moscow occupied about fourteen hours and carried us through a primitive agricultural and forest belt almost medieval in character, largely unaffected as yet by the progressive movement.

115. One of the most important modern improvements incorporated in these vessels, from the standpoint of passenger comfort, is the "manufactured weather" in the cabin and tourist class dining-rooms.

116. He had a queer fondness for alphabetizing his adjectives—for arranging such a series as "a pale, querulous, raw, snarling, timorous animal."

117. The popularity of the play—indicated by the length of its run, by the "special request" performance, by the 650 pounds paid to Procter, and by scores of contemporary accounts—is not to be questioned.

118. The ruins of extensive cities, many of them still untouched by the excavator's spade, prove the potential wealth and the age-long fertility of the region.

119. This building, like all others devoted to business offices, has in its lobby, near the elevators, the inevitable black frame enclosing the names of its tenants in small white block letters.

120. Fascinated with the sensation of actual flight and wishing to increase the length of the glide by rapid motion forward at the take-off, I took my bicycle to the top of the ramp of the old fort.

121. Cement, received at present from manufacturers in Southern California, is shipped in bulk to Boulder City, thence by the United States construction railroad to a junction with the contractor's railroad south of the gravel plant, and thence on the contractor's railroad via the screening plant to the mixing plant.

122. The average distance covered each day by the caravans seems to have been from fifteen to twenty miles, deadly difficult miles for the most part, the journey being punctuated only too frequently by encounters with Indians, Mexicans, half-breeds, and renegade whites.

123. He returned in a few minutes—lantern in one hand and a tray in the other—fitted the long tumblers into the receptacle provided for that purpose in the broad, flat arm of each chair, placed a box of cigars, with an air-tight lid, on a wicker table in the center of the group, and padded off silently, taking the lantern with him.

124. Think, in addition, of cheap rotary drilling, wells punched down in ten days to two weeks, the Woodbine sand approximately 3500 feet below the surface, the oil of best grade, the size of wells

tremendous, making the daily production 350,000 barrels on May first, even with the curtailment agreements.

125. And the emotions are the emotions common to mankind: love of home and country, pride in ancient institutions, regret for their passing, awe and superstitious terror stirred by the sense of the past still at work in our own lives, hatred kindled by an ancient wrong, loyalty to creed or kindred or the fortunes of a fallen king.

Sentences Containing Verbals

126. On a recent visit to Cleveland, before lecturing at its art museum, I spent an afternoon studying the switchboard at its symphony hall.

127. To tell only your own side of the question and to refuse to talk with any reporter is now only common sense.

128. Weary and numb, oppressed by the gloom and the fog, touched by the tender beauty, the traveler yields himself to brooding fancy.

129. I went to the house he had indicated, and by striking a series of matches found my way to a chamber fitted up with a bed and a washstand, where I managed to doze off and on until sunup.

130. While I was leading the way with great caution, following stealthily the now well defined track, my follower suddenly caught at my shirt sleeve, bringing me to an abrupt standstill.

131. Ordinary men and women, having the opportunity of a happy life, will become more kindly and less persecuting and less inclined to view others with suspicion.

132. The records pertaining to this investigation are considered confidential; hence it has been impossible to ascertain the grounds upon which Governor Ferris became so firmly convinced.

133. The logic of events, which ought to drive them in this direction, seems quite as often to drive them to stubborn and short-sighted adventures.

134. The layer is generally thickest and densest shortly after noon, reaching a maximum at about one, shrinking to a minimum around four.

135. The ancient lands of this region form an almost inexhaustible storehouse filled with perishing and still unsalvaged evidences showing early human development.

136. I saw an old cow elk coming up the canyon at a brisk trot, her wide ears laid back, long neck outstretched, dark coat gleaming in the last rays of the setting sun.

137. Fluorescence of a document takes several forms, depending

upon the paper, ink, or any chemical or other materials in the object examined.

138. To understand the motives behind this perpetual buying and returning, one must take into account the many varying degrees of honesty and dishonesty in the human animal.

139. From time to time travelers and explorers coming out of South America report having heard of white Indians living in some inaccessible jungle of that southern continent.

140. Not wishing to intrude, also sensing that something was amiss, the lithe youngster raced again down the slope to the horses.

141. Oftentimes, hurrying home in the cold weather to prepare what snack she had in store, and finding her lodger down in the kitchen with the chair drawn close to the stove, it seemed the least she could do to put him at his ease was a "Thanks kindly for minding the fire."

142. The most important difference is that the author does not attempt to inspire the emotional reactions of his readers by painting in startling colors the horrors and the sufferings of the place.

143. Dr. Simpson, after examining a great variety of chemicals in the hope of finding a substitute for ether, adopted chloroform as the most promising possibility.

144. When angered mothers came down the path, having heard of the doings of the night, the smooth rascals would pretend to be industriously engaged in sweeping up the floor and pouring out my coffee.

145. Soon the woman is also working—to save money, get ahead, and keep up with more prosperous acquaintances who are trying to climb into the middle class.

146. In half an hour we stood upon the sharp dividing line—on one side the bare slopes leading down to the busy towns, on the other the untouched forest with its dim, green mysteries.

147. Instantly the practised mountain men leaped to their preparations for defense—seizing the rawhide ropes wound about the horses' necks, and with them tying the animals closely nose to nose.

148. Modern science has supplied a new method—that of measuring depth by the time required for sound waves to travel downward from the keel of the vessel and for the echo to be reflected from the bottom of the sea.

149. To survey the array of crime fiction on the bookstands at present is to be reminded of the familiar joke about murder as a fine art.

150. One famous college president, having recently celebrated his retirement, was heard to express the most boundless satisfaction at no longer having to give any heed whatever to those turbulent alumni.

Complex Sentences

151. Not long ago one prominent citizen of White River was taken off his boat, hustled away, and executed in Ohio because a detective recognized him.

152. When that terror seizes me, I am obliged to rush out of doors to get away from myself—or the part of myself I leave in the house.

153. Dust avalanches are the most dreaded, because while the ground avalanches fall according to well-known rules and at certain times of the year, those of the dust variety are erratic in their movements.

154. The tire-testing laboratory of the Universal Rubber Company is a large room which is kept at a constant temperature of about ninety degrees in order that the tires may be tested under conditions closely approximating those of a hot summer day on the road.

155. Forgery is one of the branches of crime that each year takes a heavy toll from American business.

156. A large majority of the fifteen million families which do not own their homes live on an income that does not exceed two thousand dollars a year.

157. It having long been blared into the ears of Americans that "as goes Maine, so goes the Union," the tag has assumed the color of truth.

158. Barrel-straightening is performed either on an anvil, as was the custom with the old gunsmiths, or by means of a vertical screw press.

159. On the morning of March 22, when my train drew into Jullunda station, as I stepped from the coach, a distinguished-looking gentleman approached me and asked if I was Mr. Choate.

160. A young farmer whose crops were bad in Texas and who brings his wife and baby to feed and clothe them by catching catfish may have for his nearest neighbor an absconding bank president, a college boy gone wrong, or a gangster.

161. There is a widely accepted notion that the corporation is just a business device—just an implement which enables business men to conduct their affairs with greater convenience.

162. What is perhaps not generally understood in this country is that the protocol represents far less in the way of commitment than most other countries have agreed to.

163. Millions of grown-up boys who love swift romance deplore the fact that Daniel Boone and Davy Crockett no longer tread those forest paths where automobiles are now the only peril.

164. After three weeks he felt that he had mastered the back-hand shot down the line which he had so often used with devastating effect on his best days, but which had sometimes unaccountably failed him.

165. Not to be a complete partisan is, according to American popular ethics, often identified with being a poor sport, a straddler, a man who does not know what he thinks, or is afraid to say what he believes.

166. The fact is that a plantation worker often has the power to insinuate himself into the very spirit of an animal, and to cajole that spirit into obedience.

167. He was a man that it was easy to tell a thing like that to.

168. I was on the point of tying my horse and passing back through the trees to a place down-wind from whence an approach could be made, when I heard the distant bugle of another bull far down the canyon.

169. Many a visitor to Astoria, Oregon, has exclaimed in surprise when he has seen horses neck-deep in the water struggle in with the end of a vast web that brings to light tons of gleaming fish.

170. I am content to say that, however this chapter of history ends, it summons us to do some hard thinking about democracy and the class struggle, and the relationship of political stability to economic and military power.

171. But by the time he reached the street he was rejoicing amiably to think he had so successfully ministered to one who had strayed from the faith and had called out to him at the last moment.

172. I knew perfectly well what that woman was going to say next, because she had already informed us that she had once made a trip to Europe.

173. From the welter of plans for world peace, of treaties and disarmament programs, there stands out one significant act, or rather statement of international policy, which bids fair to eclipse all others in its potentialities as a war-preventive.

174. Among the items that appear most frequently at chronic "returns" to the shops are duplicate wedding presents, Christmas gifts which people do not like, and lamp-shades that do not harmonize with rugs or drapes.

175. Harder to accept is the humorless satirist and sociologist who picks up the mother jest and turns it into a jeremiad, who picks up a grain of incongruity and magnifies it into a problem and a menace.

176. President Jessup is proposing that the new library building shall be a book-laboratory for many of the university departments of

instruction, with an individual study space assigned for every student of the university, and whole ranges of class-conference-book rooms.

177. Since the vultures were gathering in increasing numbers from every quarter of the heavens, I have no doubt that if I had not arrived so opportunely this woodland drama would have had a tragic ending.

178. The man who took a bank note from a distant bank ran an excellent chance of receiving a counterfeit and would be stuck unless, of course, he could pass it on, which was the approved way of getting rid of counterfeit notes.

179. Who has not, as a boy, watched with fascination the long strings of freight-cars on a railroad and the initials of their various owners, without wondering where each was destined, what the initials meant, and what the tightly closed box-cars contained?

180. He went to the rear of the store, where there was a water-tap, and directly returning with two buckets of water and some dry cotton cloths, indicated that I was to wash the outside of one of the show windows while he did the other.

181. Nearly a hundred years before any institution of higher learning came into existence in the English-speaking portion of the Americas, two universities, one in Chile and one in Mexico, received royal charters from the king of Spain and opened their doors to the American youth of that day.

182. Dr. Herbert Putnam, librarian of our national library at Washington, is authority for the statement that the $400,000 which, during a single recent year, went into the Harvard book collections, exceeds the annual expenditures for material of the national libraries of England, France, and Germany put together.

183. Everyone knows that an astronomer may take a photograph in a few minutes, or even seconds, which may record such a wealth of information that it takes him months or years to extract it.

184. It is only comparatively recently that geography has been recognized in America as a subject appropriate for university instruction and research, as a science which has vital contributions to make to the sum total of human knowledge, and as a subject which has a wide application to practical affairs.

185. Where no lumber company has yet invaded a region to provide work and ready money, the people live by barter, though some cash is obtained from the rider who comes in occasionally to buy up all available calves, ginseng, and wool that can be spared, as well as some hogs.

186. When I buy a property on which I must carry a mortgage, I gamble on two things: one, that a period of fair stability or of

general inflation will prevail by the time my mortgage matures; two, that the holder of my mortgage will be both able and benevolent enough to renew the mortgage even though the period may be one of depression.

187. When the last of the coats had been put on the rack, and when the sounds in the hall indicated that everyone had adjourned to the great dining-room at the back of the house—which, with the salon on one side and the music room on the other, had been cleared for dancing—Captain Hazen clutched the servant by the arm.

188. This cloud of fine particles is, in effect, a comet-like tail to our planet—a million-mile plume of electrified particles that we trail through space as we ride our circuit around the sun at 19 miles a second, and travel toward Vega at 12 miles a second, and partake of the runaway motion of the Milky Way in still another direction at 200 miles a second.

189. On that gusty December day in 1901 when Marconi sat alone in a hospital room on the Newfoundland coast with a pair of head phones clamped over his ears, while outside his men struggled with an enormous kite to support the slender wire aerial, it was a signal from England that he awaited.

190. When I was a youth, I read Chaucer at college, like most of us, because I had to, and discovered, rather to my surprise, that a troublesome body of "classic" verse, written in an idiom so archaic as to be almost a foreign language, contained on the whole less bad poetry than can be found in a single volume of Byron, Wordsworth, Shelley, or Browning.

Compound Sentences

191. With a pump we can draw up more water than we can with our hands; with a gun we can throw farther than we can with our arms; with a calculator we can compute faster than we can in our heads.

192. The daily papers had quite fully exploited these recent experiments, so my mail was more than ever full of letters with just the necessary suggestions and advice.

193. Human nature here is much the same as elsewhere—good and bad—but I really think these people are better exponents of the golden rule than many outside the mountains, and they certainly are happier.

194. In four years at Madison nothing had altered Harper's conception of what fun is, nothing had dimmed his repellent vitality, nothing had taught him to grow up.

195. It is apparent that, even with fishes, the effect of numbers on the rate of learning depends in part on the problem set; and there is good reason for thinking that it also depends on the sort of fishes that is being tested.

196. After boring, the barrel is reamed; this process enlarges the drilled hole almost to finished size, and at the same time produces a perfectly smooth interior.

197. I read until dark, then ate my sandwiches, wishing for company; but since it was Sunday, there were no other passengers and no one else to signal the train.

198. Ruskin could not paint while thousands in England were starving, nor could Carlyle translate German poetry, nor could Arnold write literary essays.

199. The old woman wore a rusty old hat; her coat had once trailed a manorial lawn at a garden fête; her full and bunchy skirt dragged noisily in the dust; and in the crook of her arm she carried a big basket.

200. Mr. Cramer passed word down into the engine-room to increase to half speed, and then, hugging the oilskins closely about his body, he stepped from the wheelhouse and fought his way into the shelter of the windshield.

201. I do not know whether this is a strictly French institution, but I do know that a rack well filled is the sign of an economical, well-pleased set of patrons who come regularly, for a man does not save his napkin if he does not expect to return.

202. In a world where no one is compelled to work more than four hours a day every person possessed of scientific curiosity will be able to indulge it, and every painter will be able to paint without starving, however excellent his pictures may be.

203. In normal times they would be in the country or visiting relatives or at a movie, but now their leisure time is often spent in reading both at home and in the library, where every effort is made to give a good time by story-telling or puppet shows.

204. A great orator holds his audience, not by what he says, but by the way he speaks and acts on the platform, and sonorous commonplaces get over far better than first-class thought.

205. The Erie Canal ran past the plant, and when a package of guns was to be shipped, a plank was lifted in the floor of the bridge and the package was handed to the tillerman of a passing boat.

206. Members of the faculty are living in various dormitories even at the present time, yet the only times when their neighbors ever

see them are when they come around with a peevish scolding or an ominous warning.

207. When an individual makes a scientific discovery, he is free, if he can, to make a fortune from its proceeds; but when a scientist attached to a university makes one, there is a tradition that he must exert no effort to profit personally by it, but must publish it for the benefit of humanity.

208. The conjurer, Tabashaw, shook his tent, rattled his rattle, and then, when the rain stopped and the moon appeared, he came out in a white wolf-skin, with a buffalo-tail hanging from his wrist to brush away mosquitos, and blew fistful after fistful of swansdown at the bodies of the vermilion dancing women sticky with salmon oil.

209. The success of the nature-lovers is a healthy sign, for a people cannot be far removed from innocence when books of this sort are widely read and when even the daily newspapers drop wars and politics for a rhapsody on cock-robin or autumn leaves.

210. The Peruvian Indian, indifferent in everything else, nevertheless employs the most extreme care in the cultivation and harvesting of the coca plant; he is on his guard lest the slightest harm befall it, he cleans and harvests it with care, he treats it like a dear and precious child; the leaves which the wind blows away he scrupulously collects; it would be a calamity if they should be uselessly wasted.

Miscellaneous Sentences

211. A fade-out as, hand in hand, they stroll down the lane into a purple sunset, the evening star aglow, the new moon a silver crescent on a still-visible sphere.

212. Adjacent to these layers of coarse conglomerate are two others of sandstone, containing only cemented sand; and still others of shale, obviously consisting of compacted mud.

213. So many globe-trotting amusements to pass this young man's time away—playing polo hard all summer, or racing and cruising with Geoff on Geoff's boat, the *Aquila,* or going to Scotland at the end of August with his family, who had taken a moor for the shooting, and staying with them in Leicestershire for the hunting next season.

214. Here in the reek of garlic and stale cabbage, in the din of jostling crowds, curses, rough jokes, and perpetual haggling, one comes upon the real paradise of the commercial-minded and the shrewd.

215. After being some time amongst these people, and gaining their confidence, I learnt from them that this was a ceremony of deep

significance, for they assured me that when they slept by that shrine of their departed ancestor, he came back and spoke to them and was able to give them help to carry on their life.

216. In order to be a good door-opener a teacher needs two things: first, a wide and perpetually growing knowledge of books that really appeal to the young person; and, second, a method for getting these books to the friendly notice of his pupils.

217. True enough, but each time through some such accident as a sudden gust of wind that left him uncovered, or a hole in the ground that sent him sprawling.

218. The reporting of all cases of infectious disease, required by law, is so much a matter of course today in civilized countries that it is difficult to understand the indifference to these matters existing only a few years ago.

219. Thus Laval, almost in a single day, from being the potential chief dish of a cannibal banquet, became an absolute monarch with the power of life and death over nine thousand souls, and the owner of seemingly inexhaustible pearl fisheries.

220. He was a deeply religious man, a student of philosophy, an ardent supporter of the Salvation Army, and was known to many of its representatives as Brother Kimball.

221. The fact that he employs only men who have passed the test does not prove that he thinks the test is infallible.

222. Not that the trappers were really becoming more numerous, but that Andy's restless mind imagined they were.

223. In the heart of Africa, two thousand feet above the sea, a lake that was bounded on the west by the territory of one nation, and on the east by the territory of another.

224. At the time I first knew Rosalie she was a stunning woman of sixty-five, of statuesque Roman profile and ample form, animated by keen likes and dislikes for the people she let in to be fed.

225. In the upper part of this geological formation two members of nearly black sandy shale, one of them more than a thousand feet above the other, contrast strongly with the red beds.

226. Oh, not in the least, I assure you, for I know that people who hear me over the radio want to know what I look like.

227. Never again to ride back in the dark from Montecito, peering to find the fork in the road, wondering whether the dogs at Sol Anderson's would bark.

228. Japanese swords may be the small dagger type used to throw like a dart, or any of the various short or long styles up to the huge votive swords too large ever to be swung.

229. The Arabs acknowledged having hoisted the British colors without authority, but unanimously craved permission to place the whole country under the protection of the British Nation.

230. Another man—Mr. Archer Lowman—not so old and not so young, but looking uneasy, wearing a costly robe and waiting nervously in one of the steamer-chairs on the piazza.

231. After having cut away the bush to make a path by which to enable me to extract the car, I found that the engine was in order and the car undamaged, except for a bent starting-handle.

232. How incredible that while he was hungering for some bread and butter other men were spending hundreds of dollars for the sheerest follies.

233. On the whole, one of the strangest pictures that ever painted itself—flaming off there on its background of vivid black.

234. If a theory thus palpably based upon superstition were enthusiastically introduced today, it would still obtain a following, for the modern men and women are no more intelligent than their ancestors; but this following would not now be from among the medical profession.

235. He did not again make himself the butt of his wife's irony by producing more things than his family could use, just to demonstrate the efficiency of his household machinery.

236. The dog slept uneasily, turning and twisting in his sleep, making a new bed for himself in that ancient fashion peculiar to animals, turning around and around before settling down for the night.

237. Yes, sir, twenty years of hard labor for big-hearted old Dorsey if his sister fails us now.

238. I believe this so thoroughly that, teaching as I have in grades five to nine where the pernicious influence of college preparation is not powerful enough to force a method on me, I have deliberately given up every phase of the teaching of reading that interferes with my primary purpose of making my boys like to read.

239. As long as public opinion the whole world over tacitly sanctions—nay, positively approves—two standards of financial morality, one for the income-tax collector and one for the shareholder, it would be absurd to criticize Morrison for doing what the majority of public companies are doing and are being praised for doing.

240. A single yellow chrysanthemum floating in a large bowl of Lalique crystal—what could have been a more stunning ornament for the center of a dining-table?

241. From the investigation conducted by Judge Stolen, it is not to be doubted that the most extraordinary pressure was brought to bear to produce a confession from Johnson and thus solve the mystery.

242. Admired in his own day as no English novelist has ever been admired, Scott's only regular readers nowadays are schoolboys who study his works under compulsion and without pleasure, as a holiday task.

243. He rose to his feet, grasped a stanchion as the destroyer heeled heavily over, waited until she came back to an even keel, then walked quickly over to the forward bulkhead, and took the speaking-tube from its hook.

244. That some people believe vaccination is wrong shows how small is the influence of science, which you are bragging about.

245. It is not beyond the bounds of possibility that the general level of culture in this country may eventually rise to a point where a group of wealthy citizens will feel that it is no less important to provide their city with a theater than with a museum or a concert-hall.

246. Just to realize how the dynamiters' blasts rumble in the depths of coal and ore mines, in quarries, along our highways and in tunnels under mountains, in swamps and in lumber camps and on farms, at the bottoms of harbors and in the subways under the streets of our big cities.

247. The light had been extinguished when the contact over the door has been broken, so that the whereabouts of the destroyer could not be disclosed to any enemy submarine that might be lurking in the vicinity.

248. At one camp on the Marne River I saw fishermen strung along the banks of the stream, all wearing a sort of Tyrolean cap of green feathers, and with creels of uniform make and color swung from their shoulders.

249. A first-rate cameraman invariably oils and inspects his machine every morning before turning a crank, removes the lenses and wipes them clean of fingerprints and dust, lest the beautiful heroine look fuzzy to the customers later on.

250. In the height of the quarrel, when she was hysterical with grief and anger and with wounded pride because the whole town knew what she had not known, it had seemed to him that when she was calmer he might reason with her, that she might come to understand, even to forgive him, after a while.

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